



ドレスな 僕が
やんごとなき方々の
家庭教師様
な件

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Illustration karory

“万能の天才”と呼ばれた
双子の姉が失踪！

僕が身代わりを
やることに――!?

トレスの僕が やんごとなき方々の 家庭教師様な件



「この国家的大事の前では、ささいなことです」

「シャルくん、きみがグリンダの代わりに、
エーレンの国王一家の
家庭教師になつてください」

「無理！ 絶対無理！
双子つていっても、

グリンダは女で、僕は男だぞ！」





第二王子・真

第二王女・更紗

第一王子・竜樹

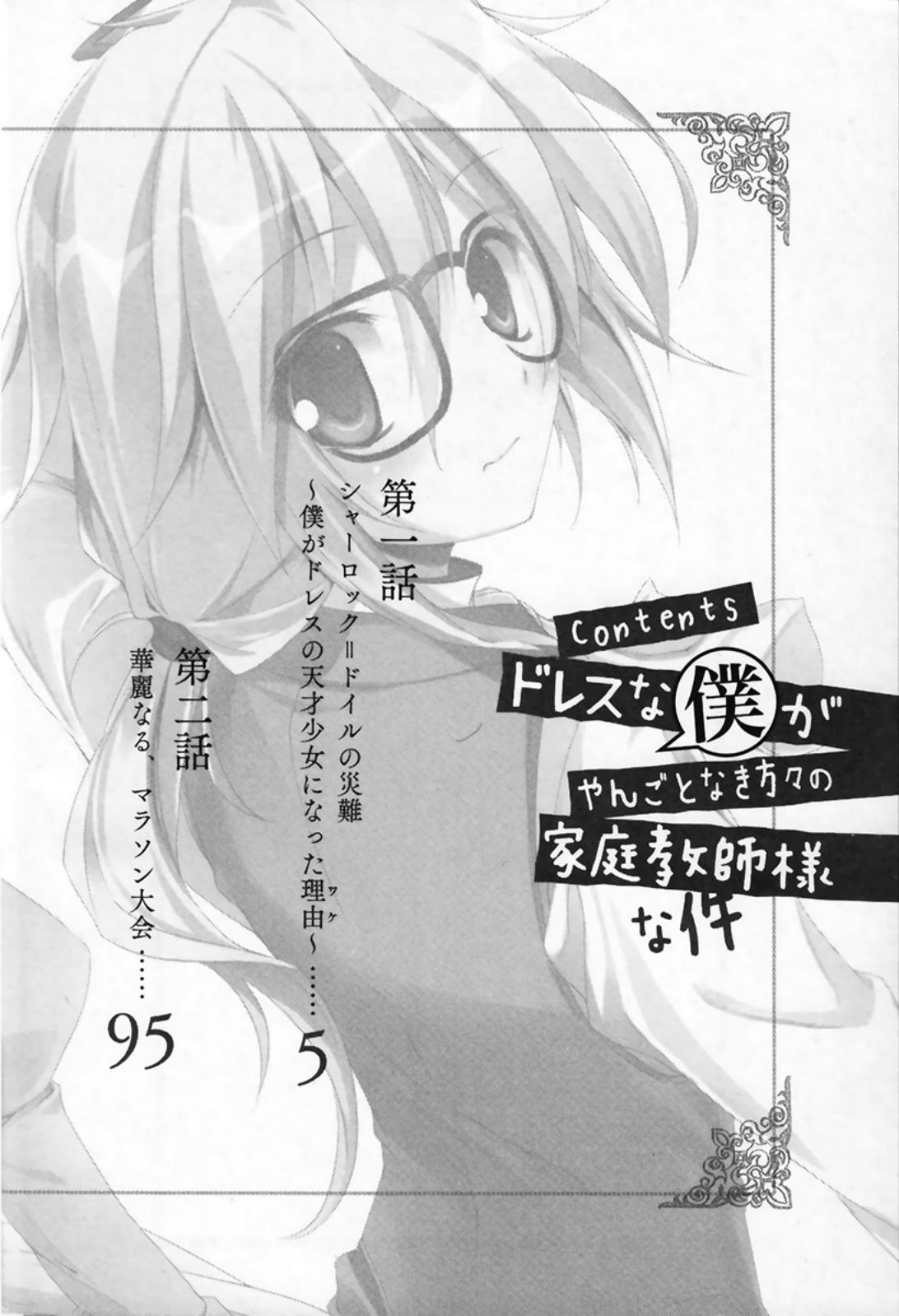
シザエルエ

雪





「先生は、
わたしに会いに
来てくださった……のでは
ないでしょうか？」



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第一話

シャーロック＝ドイルの災難
～僕が“ドレスの天才少女”
なった理由～



Chapter 01

“Hoho! So that’s the acclaimed girl-genius Ms Glinda everyone has been talking about?”

Gasps and whispers of wonder filled the main hall of the palace.

“That’s the gem from the country of arts and knowledge, the Winstoria Empire!”

“The emperor is willing to part with such a national treasure?!?”

“This is proof of how highly the Empire values our alliance! His Imperial Highness is certainly both generous and honourable!”

Despite being night, the interior of the hall was as brightly-lit as high noon by the high-dangling chandeliers lit with numerous candles.

Stiffly wrapped in a set of beautiful formal gown, I quivered at the inquisitive gazes of the gossiping officials of Eren Kingdom.

“But hasn’t it been said that Ms Glinda is a stunning beauty with bright golden blonde hair, divine bright blue eyes and a neck as slender as that of a swan? All I see here is just an ordinary cute girl of seventeen!”

“No no no! Don’t be deceived by her outer appearance! Ms Glinda’s powers can outweigh a hundred scholars, a thousand merchant and ten thousands soldiers!”

Words that I had been hearing since young.

And indeed, Ms Glinda Dolye of the Winstoria Empire was truly the greatest genius ever born.

Gaining entry to Winstoria Empire’s Imperial University at the age

of seven with full marks at the entry examination, she attained professorship at the age of twelve.

The year after that, she was awarded her own research centre by the emperor himself at the Imperial Research Institute, and became the deputy director of the cultural ministry that same year.

Now seventeen, she was unrivalled in knowledge, be it in politics, economics, arts and sciences or even military strategies. What a monster.

There was no exaggeration.

The scary thing about it was that everything rumoured about her was completely true.

However, the biggest problem right now was that the one standing trembling in the gathered gaze of Eren's top officials was not the girl-genius Ms Glinda, but her ordinary twin-brother, me.

Nooooooooooooo!!! How did I land myself in this situation?

The story began one week ago.

Back then, I was still a housekeeper (and failed college-entry exam student) in the capital of the Winstoria Empire, Vienna.

I had just been dumped by Fleury, the girl who worked at the local bakery, and was crying my way home when I caught that fellow.

“Ho! You’re back! So you’re Sher-chan?”

The front door to our house which was supposed to have been locked when I left was now open, and the apparent thief, a gentleman garbed in formal attire, sat smiling at me from the living room sofa.

He was tall and elegantly clad in black from head to toe; black overcoat, black waistcoat, black pants and black gloves. Even his neatly-combed hair was black, though blue shined in his alert and

warm eyes which brimmed with intelligence and honesty.

Sher-chan was my nickname.

My father was raised in Orlando in the West as a merchant, and my mom who was from Romancia used to call me Sher-chan since I was young. Therefore, everyone me called me that as well and not my given name, Sherlock.

And that was somewhat fitting, because a college-exam failure like me couldn't possibly have such a gallant-sounding name, right?

I was somewhat uncomfortable in the presence of this successful-looking handsome individual smiling before me, as if to rub salt on my recent break-up,

“Who are you?”

I asked in suspicion, and he cheerfully replied.

“Ho, terribly sorry. I seemed to have forgotten to introduce myself. I am Helmut Dahlberg, a colleague of your sister and a diplomat of the foreign office.”

Tsk. So that was really an acquaintance of Glinda. Did he say that he was a diplomat of the foreign office? A 1st class government official, huh. From the overly-familiar and easy way he just strolled into our house, one would have thought that he was Glinda's boyfriend. Though I dismissed that from my thought as, no matter how handsome he was, there was no way Glinda would have a boyfriend.

“If you are looking for Glinda, you should be at the Imperial Research institute or at the Cultural Ministry instead. Glinda almost never comes back home. Besides, she would be leaving for Eren Kingdom next week. She had been assigned as the royal tutor there by Imperial orders, and it is all over the news. Shouldn't you have heard already?”

Eren was a small island kingdom in the West which had been isolated both politically and economically from the outside world for a very long time. That was the situation until ten years ago, when the present king, called the Hero-King or God-King by some, ended the policy of isolation, and began a vigorous exchange of foreign cultures.

During the spring of this year, the Winstoria Empire and Eren Kingdom signed a treaty of friendship and mutual benefits, and to indicate their gesture of trust, the Eren Kingdom awarded the role of the tutor to the royal family to the genius of the Winstoria Empire, Ms Glinda.

Muah, I was just an ordinary parasite off my sister who failed even the uni-preparatory class examinations, much less getting into college, not to mention being recently-dumped and facing the bleak prospect of being a NEET for the rest of my life... To a useless brother like me, those news meant little to nothing.

“Sher-chan, it is YOU that I have business with.”

“Me? Not Glinda?”

“My apologies, Sher-chan.”

He stretched out a slender finger and plucked my glasses from above my nose, then loosened my tied hair and lifted up my bangs.

“Hey! What are you doing?!? Stop touching me!”

The suave diplomat peered at my frantic face carefully, then nodded and said.

“Hmm, this should work.”

“W-what should work?”

“Sher-chan, how many fingers am I holding up?”

The official ignored my complaints and lifted up his fingers.

“Two.”

“Now?”

He walked further away.

“Three.”

“Your eyesight seems alright. Why wear glasses?”

“That’s none of your concern! Please return me my specs!”

The official of the foreign office dodged my outstretched hands with a warm and honest smile.

“Sher-chan, you are perfect! Your eyes, nose, lips, neck and limbs, slender waist, white skin, petite frame, soft voice, are all too perfect! There is certainly no other man in this world more suitable than you to put on Glinda’s clothes!”

“What are you talking about?!?”

I felt a chill on my spine. Putting on a lady’s clothes! Was this guy a pervert? Was this the so-called shotacon?

As I shrank back, the perverted diplomat let out a deep sigh.

“Actually, Glinda had disappeared.”

“Oh?”

Disappear? Glinda disappeared?

“A slip of paper was left on the table of the cultural ministry office. It wrote:’ I am not Glinda Dolye any more from today onwards. Any subsequent issue is none of my business.’ This happened two days ago.”

Not... Glinda Dolye... any more?

I jumped a little, and felt my heart beat speeding up as cold sweat began to form.

“T-That must be a prank! Or a scam!... You should also understand, right? The wavelength of Glinda is a little different from other people... I mean, very different...”

That's right! Even if Glinda was that different, there should be no way she could have disappeared like this just when everyone was frantically discussing news of her assignment to Eren... right?

I wanted to say yes, but I knew Glinda too well.

She had always been an impulsive monster who ignored everyone, be it towards me, or even the Emperor's edict...

The horror was that the chance of this happening was actually pretty high! Too scary!

“But! From the character of Glinda, she would definitely just return carelessly...”

While cold sweat oozed from my back profusely, diplomat Helmut broke into my ramble with a serious expression.

“If only that is the case, but, according to the Imperial Intelligence Agency, they have tried to search for Glinda vigorously for the past two days in vain.”

“Imperial Intelligence Agency...”

Had things gotten this serious?

I felt a chill from head to toe.

What the hell are you playing at! Glinda!

“Time is of essence right now as tomorrow is the day that Glinda is supposed to depart for the Eren Kingdom. No matter what happens, we will have to get her aboard the ship to Eren by tomorrow

morning.”

“Y-You are too close!... About that, can’t you just tell the King of Eren that Glinda’s suddenly taken ill to buy some time?”

“Impossible”

He rejected it right away.

“At this moment, every other country is following up on Glinda’s assignment to Eren. Doing that right now would certainly cause fracture in our relationship with Eren. It may become a very sensitive political issue.”

“Y-your face is too close! Then what should we do?!?”

A feeling of unease crept up from my insides.

I was just an ordinary folk, and a recently-dumped NEET-in-the-making with a famous family member. He couldn’t be making me...

A couple of ridiculous information rose from the corner of my mind. Those were just tales from the book “Historical Gossipy Anecdotes”, such as the story of how the legendary scammer-lady imposed as a duke’s daughter to be married in another country, or how the Crimson God-Soldier Kainluca hired someone to take his uni-entry exams because he wasn’t really so book-smart... such things. Back then, I just jeered in amusement at the implausibility of such tales...

I was just glued to a tight corner of the room, shivering like a mouse before a hungry cat, when the black foreign official let out a refreshingly charming smile and said.

“Sher-kun, please take the place of Glinda as the royal tutor of Eren Kingdom.”

My mind went blank.

“No! Absolutely not!”

I refused adamantly.

“Even if we are twins, Glinda is a girl! I am a guy!”

“I understand, but that is just a small issue in comparison with the political issue we have on our hands right now.”

“Don’t just write it off like that! It is no small issue! There is a world of difference between males and females!”

“Oh? What difference?”

Helmut courteously checked me out from head to toe, and tilted his head.

“Chest! I don’t have any breasts!”

“Glinda isn’t really all that well-endowed either. Just stuffing something up there would do the trick.”

“I-I am still growing! I would definitely grow taller, more muscular, have facial hair, and my voice would deepen! The cat would be out of the bag before 2 years are out! Besides, Glinda is a genius who has achieved the 1st rank in the most prestigious imperial exams at the age of 7, while I am still failing to pass the college-entry exams at 17! How is it possible for me to be able to replace her?!?”

The replacement was dumber than the original. How ludicrous.

However, Helmut replied.

“Nothing is impossible before you actually try it.”

With a refreshing smile, he pushed me into a horse-drawn carriage, strapped a corset from some luxurious fashion store around my waist, stuffed something in the chest area, made me put on a girl’s gown, and skilfully did my hair with rose perfume.

“Great! Look identical to the original Glinda!”

Before the mirror stood an embroidery-laced, silk-covered blond girl in formal dress.

That's right. Glinda and I looked so alike that we might as well have been carved out of the same mould. But I hated to listen to others' comments that the brother was ordinary and unimpressive so much that I hid my face with my spectacles and hair.

Noooooooooooo! I was already 17 and should already be somewhat masculine! How was it possible that I still looked so much like Glinda! Why was my skin this smooth! Why were my eyes so big and lashes so long?!? Pink lips, and even the way that shivering frame was arousing protective instincts... WHY WAS I SO ENAMOURED BY MY OWN REFLECTION?!?

Helmut intimately rested his hands on my sagging listless shoulders and said warmly.

“Perfect, Sher-kun! Looks like you can really pull off the role of being Glinda's replacement! It is fortunate that nobody knew that Glinda had a twin brother, not to mention that within Eren's royal household, the eldest heir to the throne is only 11 while the youngest is just 5. It is as easy as teaching at the neighbourhood elementary school, so you can just pretend that it is a high-income part-time work. Of course, the elite agents of the Imperial Intelligence Agency would be working hard at locating Glinda, so she would probably be found within half a month... no, with their skills and experience, just a week should suffice so you would only have to hang in there for a week!”

“No! Go back, you kidnapping, gender-blind perverted government official!”

Make me into a laughing-stock for one full week? Quit joking around!

I flailed in protest around like an unhappy kid, bu...

“If Glinda ran from Imperial orders, she would definitely be imprisoned for treason.”

“Urgh!”

“And if Winstoria Empire came to blows with Eren Kingdom because of this, not only Glinda, but you her brother may be held responsible. There goes your days of peace and quiet.”

“Urh Oh!”

“No, probably both siblings may be hanged.”

“!”

This black-hearted foreign office official threatened in a kind and gentle smile.

“Glinda is a genius so she would most likely escape successfully, but that would put our country’s reputation to shame, so you may be imprisoned in her stead. Rather than becoming the scapegoat for someone else, won’t you rather live a life of luxury in the palace? Even an ordinary folk like you should know which is a better choice, right, Sher-kun?”

Hadn’t you just said earlier that the Winstoria Imperial Intelligence Agency was so excellent that they could locate Glinda in a week? How did that turn into making me into her scapegoat?!?

But I was already too scared to speak.

War! Prison! Hanging!

The mere thoughts of these made me dizzy, even my stomach was hurting (which I discovered later was actually caused by the tightness of the corset).

“Urgh... Ah... Mu... Fine... then you decide...”

The very next day, under the refreshing smile of the swindling

government official, I boarded the boat to Eren Kingdom.

Being the first time on a ship, I was badly sea-sick.

Over the week at sea, I vomited practically every single day, emptying out my guts until I feared that I was becoming mummified.

Arriving onshore Eren, we switched over to horse-carriage to Eren's capital. The capital of Eren was surrounded by walls several stories high, and spear-wielding soldiers guarded the place all the way to the royal palace.

Even within the palace, guards stood at the ready atop the battlements with a fierce atmosphere as though they would rush over at a minute's notice if we displayed any suspicious behaviour. I was scared stiff.

Now, we were walking at the center of the wide guest-hall.

Clad in a formal lady's dress, I was assuming the identity of a girl-genius.

Ooooooh! My stomach was hurting so much from the tightness! No, all of my sides were being squeezed to a pulp by this corset which seemed to have been made of whale's bones. What a torture. My bones were about to break. With the ribbons tied around my back, I felt like a leg of strung-up ham.

And this dress! To give the impression of curves, its insides had been packed into several layers adding to its immense weight! This was practically tying weights of lead around my waist! These embroidered shoes were also too small that every step seemed to be tearing them apart, making me stagger about.

To protect the reputation of the Winstoria Empire, the imperial court had gifted me with the highest quality clothing and shoes for the meeting with the royal family of Eren. Officer Helmut proudly said that "even if a village girl were to put on this set of clothes, she

would look like a princess.” But I am a man! Why would I ever want to look like a princess?!?

“No problem. You look every bit as cute as a girl, and if I hadn’t known any better, I may even try to pick you up on the streets.”

Helmut happily whispered ridiculous words besides me even as I felt terribly disgusted at the thought of being picked up by men. Ohhhhhhhh. My head had begun to spin and my eyesight felt blurry.

Being the topic of discussion among a bunch of old men in another country was taking its toll on my feeble nerves.

That was because I had never been stared at by so many people before.

Since young, I had always been told that I was plain and forgettable. When I tried to confess to my 1st love, Clarisse of the same elementary class, she had instead shown me a bright angelic smile, asking who I might possibly be.

Oh? Why was there a pot-bellied old gentleman glaring fiercely at me from the front? Judging by his severe countenance and apparel that seemed more luxurious and expensive than the others, could this possibly be the King himself?

He... He didn’t seem to be very welcoming to my presence. Those pair of eyes read, “I detest you, go back to where you have come from.”

No, the King of Eren should still be quite young of age. Or could it be that the unimaginably heavy burden of governing a country was so harsh that he had aged far beyond his years?

I was standing astonished, when an uplifting voice spoke.

“Welcome to the Kingdom of Eren. It is our pleasure as the King of Eren to be able to invite the world-famous genius here, Ms Glinda.”

Huh? The voice did not seem to match the appearance.

I mean, that old uncle had not even moved a single muscle of his lips...

I slowly turned, and saw someone clad in a far more majestic, more elegant fur-caped gown than the old gentleman...

My eyes widened and my mouth drooped open.

How was it even possible?

Was this the national treasure? Or some secret work of art?

Such words of exaggeration were not unfitting to describe the extraordinarily beautiful face that appeared before my eyes.

A long ponytail of soft silver hair tied behind the neck swayed gently against clothes of shimmering blue. Dazzlingly white skin like that of a marble statue, perfectly constructed beautiful face, delicate brows, eyes of a deep blue that reminded you of the North Sea, and charmingly smiling lips.

Every part of these features looked feminine and yet combined to give an atmosphere lacking in frailty, but rather oozing of charisma and leadership.

“King Cecello of Eren possessed the beauty of a god,

Rivalling the sky-blue and silver-white of the dragon-god from the sky above,

A glimpse is enough to be conquered by the extraordinary charm and nobility.”

When I first read of it from an article of the tabloids, I nearly erupted out in laughter thinking that: “what a narcissistic girly-man.” Oh yes, sure, king of fabulous beauty... it sounded every bit as ridiculous as every other acclaimed “fabulously beautiful

XXXXXX”.

Me who had once jeered at that exaggerated description, now stood weak in the knees in the presence of his actual beauty.

How old was this man? According to the “World’s royalty who’s who” from the national library, he should had exceeded the age of 30. Could it be that this shiny object was really a monster? Or an alien?

When I looked at my own reflections under the guise of Glinda, I had thought: “Wow, so pretty. If I didn’t know that this person is actually me myself, I might even try asking her out.” But, now, in comparison to this King, I looked no better than a cricket... no, an ant... actually, a flea would be better...

Even as I stared in bewilderment, the fat old gentleman’s harsh glare brought me back to consciousness.

“I-i-i-i-i-i am grateful to your majesty for your welcome. I am Glinda Doyle, and it is truly my pressur... I mean, pleasure to be granted such an honourable position.”

I bent my head and knees, slightly lifted the hems of my skirt in a curtsey.

Noooooooo! I was soon about to be squashed flat by this corset and the pressure.

To be cross-dressing before a pretty-boy! And to rank even lower in appearance than the said pretty-boy! Urrrrgh!!!! EPIC FAIL!!!

A group of children surrounded the sides of King Cecello. These well-bred children with an obvious air of royalty came forward to greet me one by one at their father’s command.

“I am the 1st Prince, Ryuuju Von Heinz. I am glad to be granted the opportunity to learn from Winstoria Empire’s culture of such a long and enduring history.”

The black-haired and blue-eyed heir-apparent puffed up his chest, stiffened his face and called out, He gave off a feeling of having practiced for a very long time, demonstrating great force of action and awkwardness. Seeing his display of competitiveness and nervousness common to boys his age should have, I felt somewhat relieved.

“I am the 1st Princess, Seira Sveyn.”

Lifting the hems of her skirt in an elegant curtsy, this beauty of soft silver hair and mysterious purple eyes certainly had inherited her father’s genes. Oh, she’s just like a doll!

Her lifeless eyes and expression were so alike to a western-style doll.

Arms, neck and even the slight display of skin at the feet were all a pale smooth white in colour.

I remembered that the princess was just 9 years of age... She would most definitely be recorded into the “World’s royalty who’s who” as one of the loveliest princesses. Speaking of which, why was it so that this entire family had such beautiful genes?

As I stared stupidly at the princess, someone tugged at my skirt.

I looked down to see two adorable girls in wheat-blond twin-pigtails staring at me with their sky-blue eyes.

“Hay, even if Elder sister Seira is beautiful, there is no need to be staring like your eyes have popped out of their sockets! I am 2nd Princess Sarasa Gweny. I had heard that Glinda is a genius, with horns growing out of head too! But the actual person looked so... ordinary.”

The word “ordinary” pierced my heart like a knife.

“The brother is almost identical in looks to his sister, but felt completely ordinary.”

“Sher-chan, you’re so ordinary!”

These were words that I had heard so many times that I knew it even without being told so... sob...

Even as my morale took a turn for the worse, the other princess who looked identical to Princess Sarasa said.

“I am the 3rd Princess Orie Labertin. I have even heard that wings grew from the back of Ms Glinda!”

She said happily.

“And shoot lights of rainbows from her eyes!”

“And breathe fire that burns armies of enemies!”

“Have you hidden your horns? Can you show them to me and Sarasa later in secret?”

The two princesses pulled at my clothes left and right with faces of anticipation.

The real Glinda might actually have horns and wings, but that’s definitely not possible for me!

Even as I stood stumped at what to reply, Helmut beside me gave an honest smile and said.

“Glinda’s horns and wings are as rare as golden snow or seven-leaf clovers, not your everyday occurrence. Even a colleague like me has never seen them before. But since both princesses would be staying with Glinda for the next couple of years, you may probably have a chance at catching Glinda’s horns.”

“Wow! I can’t wait, Orie!”

“Yes! We must never let Ms Glinda out of our sight, Sarasa!”

The twin princesses clasped each other’s palms happily squealing

and jumping. Their twin-tails bounced around like the ears of rabbits.

Look what you have done, Helmut! That was no way to joke with young girls of eight years old! Besides, they were even planning to put me under constant surveillance now!

I angrily glared at Helmut but he pretended not to notice, reaching behind the sisters instead to respectfully lead a small boy before me.

“Glinda, this is the 2nd Prince, Shin Clifford.”

“....”

The brown-haired green-eyed boy looked up listlessly at me. In contrast to Princess Seira’s statuesque cold expression, his demeanour was one of absentmindedness.

“P-leased to meet you, your highness.”

“.....”

No response.

Surely, 5 year olds were all like that? He seemed to be trying to figure out the situation he found himself in.

Muu, 1st Prince Ryuuju, 1st Princess Seira, 2nd and 3rd Princesses the twins Sarassa and Orie, and 2nd Prince Shin...

Urgh, my head was in a mess.

Glinda was appointed as the tutor to all these children?!? What was I supposed to teach these princes and princesses? Elementary mathematics? Or some historical stories?

Prince Ryuuju had a sour face, Princess Seira had a lifeless expression, Princess Sarasa and Princess Orie kept squealing about horns and light beams from eyes and such, and Prince Shin looked almost as if he was asleep. Would I really be able to play governess

over these kids?

Bile of worry began to raise from my stomach when the king shined an elegant smile upon me, saying.

“The Queen has just given birth to the 6th child and is currently resting. She too would love to meet with Ms Glinda.”

That's right, there seemed to be no signs of the queen.

Or more accurately... Within this great guest hall, there did not seem to be any other young lady besides myself... wait, I am not a lady either!

As I retorted to myself, the King suddenly closed in before me.

He s-suddenly grasped tightly at my hands!

At the King's sudden intimate gesture, my heart nearly skipped out of my mouth and my eyes widened like saucers.

Uuuuuuuurrrhhh!!!! I-I was being grasped by another man! ... How disgusting! What was with this guy? Showing interest in me? No, that was most likely just to demonstrate his sincerity before the officials of Eren and the ambassadors of the Winstoria Empire. But wasn't this action a little too carefree for a King?

“I would also like to welcome you on behalf of my Queen. I hope that you would not only be the tutor of my children, but also be a teacher to myself.”

Uuuuuaaaah!!! I am not Glinda!....

I was just a tabloid and “Historical gossip stories”-loving, mean-spirited ordinary folk who snickered at the private matters of the upper-class, and a NEET-in-waiting!

Sweat profusely ran down my face (H-hey, l-let go of my hands already, you pervert king!) as I somehow managed to squeeze out a

reply.

“I-I would definitely do my very baaast!”



I couldn't possibly take the place of Glinda after all.

At the end of the exceedingly embarrassing welcome ceremony, I had been led to the guest room prepared for me, and once alone, I threw myself onto the bed, grabbed my head and rolled around cross-legged on the bed.

"Why did I say 'I would definitely do my baaast'?!? What's bast anyway... Everyone must be snickering in secret!"

As I thought back to the scene earlier, my cheeks burned a bright red. Helmut who stood nearby looked as if he was holding his mouth while his shoulders quivered uncontrollably; Even the king who was still gripping my hands lifted the corners of his lips slightly.

I wanna go home.

This room alone was spacious enough to contain my entire home, and it was actually pretty uncomfortable to stay within such a luxurious suite. Was the Imperial Intelligence Agency of Winstoria really reliable? When would they be able to locate Glinda? Where had Glinda gone?

Since young, I had never managed to figure out Glinda, and she had often left home for long periods spontaneously without telling anyone. Back home, she also conducted strange experiments, such as tests for the effects of some new medication on human bodies by making me drink some murky solution which caused unstoppable hiccups; or practicing hypnotism on me to make me believe that I had turned into a donkey and then ran out onto the streets braying on all fours; or asking me to help in her surgery practice by acting as the patient even though I was completely healthy...

Despite all that, should she learn of the fact that her only brother had been made to become her substitute, even someone like her with a complete different way of thinking from everyone else would come to save me... right?

As my unease reached a peak, the door suddenly opened with a

“Click”.

I instantaneously closed my legs, adjusted my skirt, knelt-sit on the bed and straightened my hair.

A soft mumble came from the opening of the door... could it be a thief? But this was a palace... Oh! Could it possibly be assassins?!?

In order to disrupt the alliance between Winstoria Empire and Eren Kingdom, assassins from other countries had come to take the life of Glinda... such events had been elaborated by the serialized novel “Twilight Empire Carebana: Double-agent Princess” I loved reading!

But I could see the swinging golden-hair and blue eyes of a little girl through the slit of the doorway – it was just Princess Sarasa and Princess Orie.

“Ah! We’ve been caught!”

“Really, it’s all because Sarasa was too loud!”

“How can that be. It must have been Orie poking your head out!”

Fuee... It wasn’t an assassin.

“T-that, what had your highnesses desired of a humble servant... I mean servant-girl like me?”

I caught myself nearly using the wrong pronoun and quickly corrected myself.

The twin princesses cutely stuck out their tongues and ran over.

“Sorry, Glinda”

“We just wanted to carry out secret ‘surveillance’.”

“To observe the horns on my head?”

See, Helmut? That was why you don’t joke around with 8 year old

kids!

“And we really want to see that.”

“Uh...”

The two of them suddenly blushed furiously and twisted around in embarrassment.

“En... we are really curious about Glinda.”

“We really want to know what kind of person Glinda is.”

Huh? Was I always this popular with girls? Oh, I didn't know that I possessed such charms that two young girls would be captivated instantan... wait, at the moment, I was supposed to be a “female”, not to mention that I had no lolicon inclinations.

The Princesses Sarasa and Orie shyly glanced upwards me, with angelic smiles so adorable that any lolicon would fall stricken. Even I myself could feel my heartbeat increasing.... No, I absolutely had no such evil thoughts!

One of the angels twisted around shyly and said.

“That's because... Glinda would soon become our Mother.”

Oh? Our Mother?

“I was so worried that Glinda may turn out to be very cruel, maybe even torturing step-daughters.”

“But Glinda absolutely doesn't look like a genius, and looks so adorable. I told Sarasa that, if it is Glinda, I would be willing to call her 'Mother'.”

Glinda was going to get married?

Was there really anyone in the world that would be willing to marry this monstrously strange man?

This strange man who already had kids, whose profession was the king of a country?

Oh.... Hooooooooooooohhhh???

“W-wait a minute! I don’t quite understand what you are talking about; doesn’t His majesty already have a Queen? Isn’t that your Mother?”

The degree of love King Cecello showered his Queen was well-published throughout the tabloids. It was said that he treasured her so much that he won’t allow her to step outside of the palace even once.

The princesses suddenly lowered their eyes, displaying looks of pain.

“.... Queen Mother had passed away after the birth of Shin.”

“!”

“The reason why Shin doesn’t speak much is because Queen Mother is no longer around. Lord Father loves Mother so much that whenever He looks at Shin, He would be reminded of Mother’s passing and avoids Shin.”

Two pairs of blue-eyes instantly filled with tears, causing me great confusion.

“B-but! His Majesty said that the Queen has just given birth to a 6th child and is recovering from labour.”

“That’s right. At the southern palace. Since ‘5 years ago’.”

“What!”

“Lord Father has been thinking that all this time. He hopes that Mother is still alive.”

Both princesses burst out into real tears.

What was up with such stories that sounded just as if they came

right out of a tabloid's serialized novel?

The Queen of Eren had died since 5 years ago?

"Uh... Even the ministers felt that this state of affairs should not be allowed to continue, and decided to find a new bride for Lord Father after discussing. So they invited Glinda over."

Appoint Glinda as the Queen of a kingdom!

Did the King know about this?

Glinda might be a genius, but she was also a cold-blooded animal incapable of romance or marriage...

Huh? The Glinda they were talking about now... wasn't that I?

So... I was going to be married?

At that instant, I could not help but let out a scream.

"HUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUH?!!!?"

They were going to make me into a Queen of that King who was as beautiful as a fairy?!?

第二話

華麗なる、マラソン大会



Chapter 02

To make me into the King's bride!

The angelic princesses rubbed off tears with their little hands, and lifted their expectant faces to look at the astonished me.

“Due to his divine looks and wisdom, everyone says that Lord Father is like a god. Even Queen Mother has been known to others as a goddess for her beauty, so neither the ministers nor the countrymen would accept an ordinary woman to be the bride of Lord Father.”

“This should not be an issue for Glinda. You’re after all a genius, just like Lord Father.”

“That’s right, even though you’re incomparable in looks to Lord Father. I am sure no other country would have a Queen with horns and wings.”

“Besides, Lord Father seems to be love-struck at Glinda at the moment they met.”

I could only let out a dry laugh.

“Hahahaha.... Haha... Your Highnesses must be exaggerating... How could such a lovely person be love-struck by a dinosaur like me?”

Laugh it off. There was no other way about it. My mind was now completely in chaos, incapable of sensible thought.

“But the way Lord Father has been looking at Glinda is so intense.”

Oh! That actually seemed true! Those eyes were truly enough to raise goose bumps under my skin!

“That has to be the 1st time that Lord Father looked so at another

woman other than Mother.”

W-was that so?

“He even held your hands.”

That’s true. In fact, I felt the action a little too over-familiar, not to mention too close for comfort.

“Glinda, do you know that in Eren, males seldom hold the hands of females? That’s because hand-holding represents the partners’ common desire to spend their lives together forever. Unmarried couples don’t even touch each other’s hand when they are dancing because of that...”

Princesses Sarasa and Orie began to dance as they spoke, causing their lace-embroidered skirts to float lightly like the spinning petals of two pink flowers. Anyone with even slight lolicon tendencies would certainly be enraptured, but none of this registered with me.

So that was the meaning behind the hand-holding!

King Cecello liked ME?

I would become the new Queen of Eren...

“Both I and Orie would support Glinda as our new Mother.”

“Elder brother Ryuuju and Elder Sister Seria may oppose, but both Sarasa and I would be on Glinda’s side.”

“So Glinda must like our Lord Father too! And, show us your horns too sometime.”

“And picnic at the palace courtyard!”

“I would even tell you where the squirrels build their nests. So adorable...”

The princesses tugged at my skirt, chattering continuously.

Their blue eyes and round faces shone with happiness at having a new Queen Mother.

“Don’t loose to Elder Brother Ryuujу, Glinda!”

“Fight! Glinda!”

The twin angels adorably punched up into the air to cheer me on, and then left with a clutter of footsteps.

I, on the other hand, was covered from head to toes in goose bumps and cold sweat.

What kind of joke was this? It was barely tolerable for me to be forced into cross-dressing, and now they were going to make me a Queen??? I am a man! I have things that man ought to have!

I rushed out of the room. I must definitely protest to Helmut! I had never heard anything about being made Queen! Nooooo! Goose bumps were popping up like a measles outbreak!

But...

“Lord Helmut has returned to Winstoria...”

“Huuuh!”

I had been left behind? Alone? So quickly?

I had been deceived – This fact stuck me like a bolt of lightning.

What should I do? If this continued, I would be made Queen! The cat would definitely be out of the bed the instant the clothes come off at the bridal chamber! Absolutely, most definitely exposed! Then, my head would roll for treason...

Nooooooooo! I don’t wanna! I don’t want to go bed with a man! Absolutely don’t wanna be executed!

If I chased after Helmut now, I might still make it in time before

the ship departed! Even though I had no idea where the port was located, I must still escape before I got forced to marry another man and then be executed!

Right! Run! Run now!

I would probably be discovered if I tried to escape via the corridor, so I returned to my room, opened the glass-door to the balcony and climbed over the parapet.

But I only discovered that this level was 5 stories high after I climbed over to the other side.

Glancing downwards, the lawn and fountains brightly lit by the moon and light from indoors looked so far away that my blood went cold from the view.

Ahhhhh! I would definitely die if I fell from here!

As I clung for dear life at the parapet, my gown fluttered in the wind and hair flew wildly against my face.

Why hadn't I change out of the gown first?

The skirt was filled with air by the wind and nearly blew away like a balloon.

It was too late for regret, and rather than returning the way I came, it would probably be better if I continued my way downwards as that would decrease the chance of me sliding down by accident. Besides, my NEET arm-strength just would not allow me to climb upwards any more.

It must hurt to be executed, but falling down and breaking my neck seemed like it would hurt a lot too. I didn't want eitherrrrr!!!

But my arms were gradually turning numb, and soon I could not feel my legs either.

Huh? Strange? Why was smoke raising out of the window over there?

White thick smoke, both warm and... could that possibly be a fire?

Trapped myself in this dangerous situation, I was certainly in no place to care about a fire breaking out elsewhere, but I found myself unable to ignore it either. So, sticking to the wall like a frog, I inched towards the window where the smoke spewed out of.

That which had looked so thick and white was actually just steam.

There was a tub of boiling-hot water besides the window, and within it sat a familiar-looking boy.

Whoa!

When glass window went “Clob!”, and the boy immediately stood up and turned in my direction.

Standing in the midst of the thick steam, the naked boy had a look of shock on his face.

I took in the entire scene while glued to the window.

I guess my gown was probably in a mess and torn from my trip down, and my tidied hair most probably had loosened and heaped all over my face.

As an aside, due to my lack of exercise, I was probably wheezing deeply with bloodshot eyes.

So I was gasping for breathe while I watched this stark naked boy – the heir-apparent to the throne of Eren – red-faced, brows lifted upwards, and face tightened.

Then...

“A-audacious fool!”

Prince Ryuujuu screamed with a furious face as red as a barbequed squid.

“Whoaaaa! S-sorry!”

I sled down in a panic.

But, there was no foothold anywhere.

Rather than calling it sliding, it should be called falling... Whoa!
Whoaaaaa!

As I clunk for dear life with my right hand at the parapet, my body swung like a pendulum. So this was the so-called, “situation of life and death”? Uhhhh... I must attempt to leap over to the balcony below.

I let go of both hands but due to the excess momentum, I did not land on the balcony, but was thrown towards the window. It was fortunate that the window had been opened, or I might have crashed into the glass.

Splash!

At the sound of water splashing, my entire body was wet.

Uwah! This was cold! Why would there be a pool inside the room?

My clothes weighed heavily as they soaked in the water, and I felt myself sinking... Help! I was about to be killed by cross-dressing!

As I began to panic, I discovered that the water was only knee deep even as water dripped from my hair and cuffs.

I brushed aside the hair on my face to find that this place was no pool, but a bath-tub filled with cold water.

There was even someone in the tub!

Silver hair that seemed spun out of moonlight, translucent jade

white skin, delicate hand and neck, petal-like lips and violet crystal eyes.

The 9-year old beautiful princess of the king of divine beauty.

Princess Seira stared at me expressionlessly like a western doll.

“.....!”

I could only let out a soundless scream.

After just peeking in at the bathing Eldest Prince Ryuuj, I had the extreme chance of falling into bath of the Eldest Princess.

What destiny did I have with baths in general? Was I tied to the bathrooms by a red string of fate?

No, this was no time to escape from reality.

Even if it was just a 9 years old girl, children this age would already begin to say: “I don’t want to take baths with daddy!”

Even if this was an accident, the situation of sharing a bath with a 9 year old girl was still highly atrocious. If dragged before a court of law, there was definitely no chance of appeal.

“T-That...Your humble servant... I mean, servant-girl is not a pervert, there is a reason for this...”

As I covered my face in explanation, Princess Seira made no reaction.

Won’t she scream or call out?

I tried peeking from between the slits of my fingers, and saw that those pair of clear eyes just stared straight into me.

“....”

“That...”

“...”

“Uhhh...”

As I spiralled into confusion and wondered what to do next, Princess Seira finally opened her mouth.

“... Isn’t Teacher going to strip?”

A clear and adorable, but flat and monotonous voice asked.

Teacher? Oh, was that supposed to be me?

“... Or is it that, everyone takes bath clothed in Teacher’s home-country?”

“N-No, people in Winstoria also take off their clothes when they bath. Oh, it is said that the 17th Emperor Chenchito steadfastly refused to take off his robe and display his skin while bathing, so strictly speaking, that isn’t the case for everyone... Argh, this has nothing to do with him though.”

I stammered out a reply. How could this child possibly be so quiet?

If someone were to crash through the window while you were taking a bath, normally you would be alarmed too, right? Suspicious? Definitely. Guarded? Of course! Who would discuss the customs of baths under this kind of situations?!?

The Princess continued in a serious voice.

“... Then please take off your clothes.”

“Huhuhu??? But! That! That would be very problematic!”

“Why? We are both girls here.”

“You would be fine if it is a female? You find it alright to expose yourself to someone you have just met today?”

“... Yes.”

She said in an even voice.

Please be more mindful of it! Even your elder brother covered himself with both hands, screamed “Audacious fool” with a red face! Or could it be that females were always this open to each other? Actually I had heard some atrocious tales about the boarding rooms of all-girls schools too...

“... If Teacher also had a habit of bathing clothed like Emperor Chenchito, it is not really appropriate of me to interfere with your personal choice.”

“R-right! Your servant... no, servant-girl loves to take baths clothed!”

Whoa! This was the 2nd time I had a slip of tongue!

Princess Seira just looked at me unerringly.

Soft loose silver hair, having had all accessories and ribbons removed, floated dreamily in the bath-tub.

Water dripped from her small chin and long lashes onto her white chest.

The moist skin was snow-white, pure like a doll of frost, or an elf resting in the water.

Urgh... I was definitely no lolicon! Absolutely not!

My type consisted of sweet-smiling and gentle sixteen to seventeen-year old girls!

But my brain was steaming and heartbeats raced non-stop.

No, that was certainly not because I was a lolicon, it had to be because this child was too special. Perhaps it was her cold expressionless stare, or maybe because it was the nakedness, that felt

unusually mature.

The problem was that she felt no threat by my presence, but just stared uninterestedly at me.

Not good! Should I stay here any longer, I might actually develop some strange inclinations! Wearing this gown for ladies, I would definitely be exposed as a pervert if anything extraordinary appeared on the lower portion of the skirt!

Besides, this bath was too cold.

At a second glance, there were even ice cubes floating atop the water! Why would she not mind it at all? I was already chattering in the teeth from the cold!

“I, I-i-i-i-i-i-I have ‘warmed’ up enough, and would humbly take my leave now. Oho.”

I climbed out of the bath, splashing water all over.

Right, I was still trying to escape from the palace and had no time to be distracted by a 9 year old girl.

But...

“... Teacher.”

“!”

A cold little hand grasped mine.

“W-What is it?”

“... Isn’t Teacher... here to see me?”

She said while still emotionless, tilting her head in query.

“Huh? N-no, that is not it.”

This child was certainly strange.

Would any guest visit the bath that his host was currently taking a bath in? No doubt a pervert would.

“... is that so?”

“Then, your humble servant... no, servant-girl would be taking her leave. Apologies for the disturbance.”

Ohhhh! I said the wrong things again! Let’s flee before I made any more mistakes!

For whatever reasons, Princess Seira seemed to display a look of pity, or was it just my imagination? No, what was I even turning back for?

Princess Seira opened her mouth again.

“... Teacher, the soap is at your foot.”

“Oh?”

As I felt uncertain, my foot suddenly slipped and my body plunged backwards.

So it seemed that there were paintings on the ceiling... of dragons and moon and ladies... paintings of legends crafted with extraordinary skills... While I pondered over such things, a ‘bang’ sounded from the back of my head and I experienced a tremendous concussion.

I had knocked the back of my head against the edge of the bath-tub.

Now was not the time to faint! Endure it!

You must fight! Sherlock Dolye!

But my head felt numb as my consciousness blurred over.

Noooooooo! What would happen to me next?!?



So warm.

I was covered by something soft and smelling of the sun. How comfy.

A clear song flowed into my ears.

“The Dragon watcheth over Seven doors;

Door of Water from which birth springeth,

Door of Light bearing God’s name,

Door of Earth which all-encompasseth,

Door of Fire that burneth away the soul,

Door of Flowers which confesseth love,

Door of the Night which summoneth beginning and the end.

Every Door is guardeth by the Dragon.

So sleep well, my lovely child”

Ohhh, what a lovely voice. Smooth and clear, but very gentle.

Wanting to know who was singing, I opened my eyes for a peek...

“Oh? You are a awake already?”

A girl of sixteen or seventeen peered at me with warm eyes and a gentle smile on her face.

Whoa... so pretty!

I still had yet to figure out what was going on, but was already mesmerized by the smile.

Rather than having a mature and beautiful woman, I much

preferred this type of girl which gave off an amiable atmosphere of worldly gentleness.

The girl staring at me gave off a feeling of friendliness and loveliness that completely fitted into my type.

She had a smaller frame than me, was both energetic and graceful and a gait as delicate as a small bird with beautiful raven-black hair tied behind her head. A white-laced apron had been wound about her black western skirt.

A maid? Had we hired a maid in our house? Did Glinda hire a maid?

So wanted to be partners with this kind of girl... To stroll hand-in-hand out in the garden...

“Teacher fainted when she knocked her head against the side of the bath. Does it still hurt here?”

As I got up, she gently stroked the back of my head.

The gentle stroking was certainly comfortable, but it also brought me back to reality and struck me with fear.

That's right! I fell into the bath while Princess Seira was taking her bath, and accidentally fell when I slipped on a piece of soap.

Where was this place?

It was as luxurious as my own guestroom, so I was probably still in the city?

I glanced down and saw that I was clad in a nightgown for ladies. Whoa! Someone had helped me change into these clothes!

“W-w-w-w-who changed my c-c-c-clothes...”

“... It's I.”

At the monotonous voice, I turned quickly.

Princess Seira was standing at the side, certainly no longer naked, but clad neatly with her hair beautifully tied.

“... As Teacher just fainted, I helped Teacher change out of the clothes... Before calling others.”

She coldly said so while looking at me with purple crystal eyes.

“I-it must have been difficult?”

“... Yes.”

“T-that, oh! ... But... At that time... “

Had you seen my ‘naked body’?

I wanted to ask, but could not put it into words.

Princess Seira was just as expressionless as a puppet, giving no hint of any emotions. If she had actually discovered that I was a male, would she still be this calm?

Might that mean that while she helped me change my clothes, she did not look once at my body?

Let’s assume that was truly the case.

Even though my heart was in my throat, I could only thank Princess Seira.

“Thank you. Princess Seira is the saviour of my life.”

“... Please don’t mention it.”

She replied in a calm voice.

Was this child truly only nine? Shouldn’t nine-year old girls be richer of expressions?

Princess Seira looked as if she was completely uninterested in the rest of the world, and this was quite similar to Glinda.

Even though this was the case, she did not escape from my glance, but continued to stare at me.

“... That’s right. Why did Teacher climb through my window dressed as such?”

“!”

My heartbeat nearly stopped.

To ask this just at this moment! She must have done it on purpose, right? Definitely on purpose!

“That, T-t-t-t-t-that was because... I am still unfamiliar around the palace, lost my way by accident, and somehow climbed over the balcony and ended up wall-climbing on the outside...”

H-how unpleasant.

Would anyone belief this? But since the opposite was just a child, maybe she would actually believe this...

Trembling, I stole a glance at Princess Seira, but she was as expressionless as before, as if to say. “Are you kidding me.”

Aaaaaa! Guess it really wouldn’t work!

At this, a smooth voice answered.

“Ara, that must have inconvenienced you greatly.”

The maid looked at me with a face filled with sympathy.

“As Teacher has said, this palace is so huge that even now I loose my way around.”

“R-really?”

She believed! She then continued seriously while gripping my hands adorably in hers.

“That’s right! There was this time when I got lost in the woods just outside the castle and nearly froze to death before I was brought back; then this other time that I got lost in the changing room and was locked in for nearly half the day; There was still this other time that I wanted to clean the windows at the eastern tower, but somehow twisted my ankle at the wine cellar in the west; Or that time when I went up to the roof to sun out the blankets, but fell atop the apple trees below together with the blankets.”

What a miracle that she managed to survive to this day.

“Teacher must also be very scared? I most definitely ~~~ understand it completely. Oh, so pitiable.”

The maid said with warm tear-filled eyes.

“His Majesty has ordered me to come to tend to Ms Glinda. I too have wanted to come over myself, so I am truly happy. From now on, I would be careful not to let Ms Glinda get lost so you can safely move about the palace.”

“T-thank you.”

Despite being bumbling and careless, she was such an honest and gentle girl.

Ohhh, I so wished I could go on a date with this girl in the gardens... but the thought of myself in cross-dress walking beside this maid next to the fountains sent me bowing my head in despair.

“Teacher has been sleeping for a while, so are you hungry? Is there anything you would like to eat? Be it porridge, soup or sandwiches, I can make it in an instant.”

“Are you going to cook for me?”

“Yes, though I don’t know whether it would be to Teacher’s tastes. Oh, I specialise at dessert, and can also prepare red tea.”

The maid blushed and said in embarrassment.

Ohhhhh! SO CUTE! That impeccable gesture and expression sent my heart pounding.

“Then may I have some dessert, red tea and some sandwiches, please.”

I ordered a great deal directly.

“Alright.”

The maid replied with a pure smile.

I could certainly live with this kind of conversation.

“I would be back soon.”

She lightly left the room.

While I shyly watched the maid’s departure, I suddenly remembered in fear.

Princess Seira was watching me listlessly.

“....”

“Haha... Hahaha... Looks like I have caused trouble for the Princess.”

“... That’s not so.”

“That, isn’t my chest somewhat small? Due to its flatness, I have sometimes been mistaken to be a boy, but I am really a girl. I normally have to stuff 5 layers of pads!”

Did I say too much?

“Also, my crotch has become swollen due to insect bites!”

“Crotch?”

“A, Ah! That is really uncouth of me! F-forget that I said anything!”

Calm down! Calm down now, Sherlock! Stop talking about crotches to little girls and change the topic of conversation!

“The maid just now looks so cute.”

“... Yes.”

“Is black hair rare in Eren?”

People in the kingdom of Eren typically had blonde hair and blue eyes, so black hair was a symbol of foreign origins.

“... Things have changed recently. Lord Father likes foreigners, and many foreigners are now working in the city.”

Whoa! I had thought her a dull kid, but it seemed that she was actually pretty intelligent... This was nothing like what a nine-year old child would say, or was it that the children of royalty were all like this?

“... Teacher Glinda.”

“Y-Yes?”

“... There’s something I would like to ask of Teacher.”

“!”

T-T-th-th-that, w-what was going to happen this time?

Princess Seira quietly looked at me who frantically tried to prepare myself, and then said.

“... Nevermind.”

Her calm voice carried nothing strange or remarkable.

What was it about? The curiosity was killing me. Was she trying to bully me? Was this the so-called teacher-bullying?

As fear began to creep upon me, the maid returned.

“Sorry for the wait, Teacher Glinda.”

The exuberating voice instantly flipped the foreboding atmosphere over.

Teapot and cups, sandwiches, tiny fruit tarts and a pound-cake made from cherry tomatoes and lime were spread atop a silver trolley.

The maid poured red tea into a teacup with a smile.

“Here, please enjoy.”

“Wow thanks, I will tuck in.”

I bit into a sandwich with slices of cucumber and ham within. The taste of mustard was a little heavy, but lightly sweetened and very tasty.

At my words of praise, the maid blushed happily.

“Thank you, please enjoy yourself.”

“Enn.”

The maid smiled in delight as she listened to my piled compliments of “Tasty” and “Excellent”.

It felt so much like honeymoon. If only I was not dressed like a girl right now...

“Oh that’s right. While I was asleep earlier, I felt as if I heard a song. Was that you?”

At my query, the maid shyly said.

“Yes. Sorry to have disturbed Teacher.”

“There’s no such thing! Your singing voice is divine! I have never heard such a lovely song.”

As I said so, she flushed a fiery red throughout and cringed.

“No way... Teacher Glinda comes from the Winstoria Empire which is renowned for its culture and arts, where there has to be far better music. Please don’t try to flatter me.”

“This is no flattery. Your singing voice is more beautiful and touching than that of famed singers in Winstoria! “

She wiggled as the smile on her lips bloomed like a flower.

“T-that... I am very happy, thank you. It is said that the people of Winstoria Empire begin taking up music and composition at an early age. What instrument does Teacher play?”

I was drunk in her innocent smiling image as I replied.

“Enn... I dabble in the tambourine sometimes.”

I blushed the moment those words left my mouth.

The tambourine, a wrist-sized bangle with seven bells attached on its ring. This was little more than a musical toy for small children. Having grown up in the capital city Vienna, which flourished in arts and music, and where families held orchestras on public holidays, I could hardly hold my head up even over my skills in the tambourine.

Glinda was of course proficient in both violin and piano, but even played the conductor to the Winstoria Empire’s 1st class orchestra in what became a legendary orchestral concert in the history of music. Countless audiences to that concert went away moved to tears dreamily.

For a musical genius as such to claim love for the tambourine...
Ohhhh!

I was so ashamed that the roots of my ears blushed red, but the maid simply displayed a gentle smile.

While the smile earlier bloomed with charm like a flower, the smile she gave me now emitted kindness and warmth, filling me with a sense of gladness.

“Wow... That’s marvellous.”

Was that just flattery? Or was she consoling me?

But the maid looked genuinely happy and glad, and she continued in a voice filled with emotions.

“I also loved the sound of tambourine. It sounds so adorable.”

My heart nearly leaped out of my mouth.

I was filled over with her clear refreshing voice, warm words, gentle smile, all of which seemed to taste like honey.

Whoa! What should I do? I was fidgeting non-stop while my heartbeat raced.

Could this be...

B-But, I had just been ditched... and was wearing a breezy gown for ladies right now... , Ohho, even so I still...

I had completely disregarded the fact that a 9-year old girl was coldly staring at me nearby.

The joyful feeling of sugar overflowed from my chest as I barely stopped my nose from bleeding from the rush in my head.

This feeling – I recognized it as love.

“Well maybe it is alright to stay just a while longer.”

The next day, I excused myself to rest from the exhaustion of my travels.

Both breakfast and lunch had been served by the cute petite black-haired maid.

The mere sight of her kind smile was enough to send my feelings fluttering to the sky. How great was the power of love.

Just a mere day before had I been trying to escape back to Winstoria Empire, but now I thought that it might be worth staying for a little while as Glinda’s replacement if I could just enjoy this for a bit more.

Yes, since the targets are children aged between 5 to 11 years old, even I should be capable of teaching them some elementary mathematics while living luxuriously in this room at the expenses of Eren Kingdom.

Viewing it from another angle, was this not the ideal NEET life I had been aiming for?

“Ya, you can definitely do it, Sher-chan.”

The smirking face of Diplomat Helmut surfaced in my brain.

Despite forcing me into cross-dress and kidnapping me into a faraway country, the swindler did give me this opportunity to encounter new love, so I probably should forgive him.

I should be the one thanking you instead. Thank you, Lord Helmut!

Also, thank you to Glinda who disappeared!

I must sing of the springtime of my life’s fateful encounters!

Muah, that’s certainly because I was in love.

Ohhhh, the joy!

I seemed to have forgotten something in my exuberance.

Something which I only remembered when evening fell.

The door suddenly opened, and maids filed into the room carrying evening dress, accessories and cosmetics.

“These are gifts from His Majesty to Lady Glinda. Tonight, there will be a special banquet to welcome back Her Majesty who had been absent for so long, and we have been ordered to come help Lady Glinda prepare for it.”

At these words, I nearly fainted.

I had forgotten it completely! I was supposed to become the replacement for Queen!

Chapter 03

What “Welcome party for the long-absent Queen”!

I was thoroughly confused by the group of maids who smilingly surrounded me with piles of combs, perfume, ribbons and powder in their hands.

“Lord Father has decided to introduce Glinda as the new Queen to everyone!”

“Congratulations, Glinda!”

Princess Sarasa and Orie crept out from nowhere and softly whispered.

“How could that be! I would be in troubled! Be-because I... That’s right! I-I already have someone I like!”

“Wow! So romantic! But you would soon forget the other man after you married with Lord Father. Right, Orie?”

“That’s right, Sarasa! That’s because there’s no one else in the world as strong, wise and handsome, and as powerful and wealthy as our Lord Father.”

The princesses said with angelic innocence.

“Uuuuaaaa! This is preposterous! I must protest to the government of Winstoria Empire! I will write to the Emperor himself!”

“It is alright. It takes a week to deliver the mail, and by that time you would have fallen for Lord Father.”

“What type of wedding gown would you like, Glinda? You must love those with long veils and puffy gown, right?

I didn't like this sort of stuff!

So would I be going on honeymoon trip with that pretty-boy King? Splashing sea-water on the beaches of some southern tropical island with just the two of us? Then be bridal-carried by him? Ahhhhhh! Measles were beginning to break out! I-i-itch! That's disgusting! I refuse to play hide and seek on the beach with another man!

What's more, even before that could happen, my identity would be totally exposed on the wedding night, and I would have been sent for execution already!

That idiot Helmut! How could he have returned all by himself? Had he planned to escape? That must have been so! I wouldn't put it past him to do something so cold-blooded!

Glinda too! If you were really a genius, come save your little brother from this predicament now!

“Come, Lady Glinda, let's put on the gown.”

“Whoa! Don't unbutton! Don't loosen the ribbon! Ahhhh! If you pull that string, the skirt would drop! Uaaaaah! Nooo! Ahhh!”

Hands came from all directions to pull off my clothes, loosen my hair, spray cosmetics and powder foundation on my face, and I tried to shield myself from them with all my strength.

Ohhh! Why had I not run away sooner?”

Now was no time to be falling in love! How could I have imagined I could just stay and become a NEET in Eren, or even fantasized about lying atop the laps of that maid while she gently cleaned the insides of my ears? I was such a fool!

While I continued to blame myself, the preparations were speedily completed, with flowers decorating my bound hair, jewelled accessories around my neck and wrists, even shoes so luxurious that my toes were about to numb.

“Glinda looks so lovely!”

“Lord Father would fall in love with you all over again!”

The twin angels were ecstatic.

I absolutely refused to have any man fall in love with me all over again! I am a man myself! Even if your King father was both rich and beautiful, I could still hardly accept it as a matter of principle! There's just no way I could become your motheeerrrr... !!!

“I can't take it! I have to go to the loo!”

Unabashed, I shouted and, lifting my skirts' folds, fled out of the room in large strides.

Run! Run! Run!

I must flee directly to the harbour from the palace! Or, failing to do so, lock myself into a toilet and excuse myself with having diarrhoea!

But, along the corridor...

“Hey, Ms Glinda!”

I was immediately hollered at by the pot-bellied uncle.

That was the guy who had been staring at me the day before in the welcome ceremony.

“You don't look too well, is it due to the fact that you are not accustomed to our food? Heard that you had been stuck in bed all day too. With such frail constitution, are you really fit to be a tutor for our royal family?”

He asked in a derisive manner.

“I have an urgent business! Please excuse me!”

“What! How dare you just ignore me!”

I could hear his angry complaints from behind as I fled from his side.

Ha, would this corridor just go on forever?!?

Finally reaching a corner at the end and rounding it...

“Whoa!”

“Ah!”

I accidentally knocked into Prince Ryuuju and squashed him against the floor full bodily.

Prince Ryuuju stared at me red-faced with his mouth gasping open and close, and then screamed like the day before.

“I-i-impudent fellow!”

“Sorry! Sorry!”

I got up immediately and took to my legs, my skirt nearly flying upwards.

Uuaah! Not only had I peeked upon the Prince’s bath, I even pushed him over. My rating must have been rock-bottom in Prince Ryuuju’s opinion.

But, since I could not possibly become his Mother, or his teacher, there should not be much to regret over.

Looked like it might be better to find other means of escape, find a toilet, take off this body of heavy clothes and accessories, and remove this ungodly tight corset...

At this instance, someone barred my path...

Holding a thick old tome in her chest stood the divine-looking Princess with mysterious silver hair and amethyst eyes. She emitted an aura of immense presence like the fabled fairy here to announce

my doom.

I halted immediately.

W-what's going on? I could not move!

The purple crystal eyes stared at me unmoved.

Uuuww... what was I doing... there's nothing to be scared about 9 year old girls...

“...Teacher.”

The lovely girl spoke.

As I became breathless with nervousness...

“Lady Glinda, we are here as your guard.”

A group of soldiers appeared from nowhere.

“His Majesty awaits. Come this way please. Your Highness too, please return to the section for ladies.”

“Uh, a moment please! Your humble servant... I mean, servant-girl would like to go relieve herself!”

“We would await your highness, so please do so quickly.”

“Are you going to stand guard outside of the toilet?!?”

“That's right. This is because Lady Glinda is an important guest of His Majesty.”

The soldiers replied seriously.

“With someone standing just on the other side, how would I possibly be able to relief myself?”

“If something were to happen to Lady Glinda, we would have no

way of answering His Majesty.”

“Uuwww... Nevermind...”

Sigh, so much for running away.

At this stage, I could only squarely walk towards the banquet hall.

My fate was like a candle in the wind.

Would it be better to declare to the entire world that I am a man before I became the Queen? Or should I wait until the night of the wedding with only two people on the betrothal bed?

No matter which path I could choose, it would turn into a foreign relations crisis, with the alliance between Winstoria and Eren at stake.

If a war were to start due to this, I would certainly be known to history as the “transvestite who deceived the king”, what a lovely title.

Me. No. Want!

The great hall was filled with a train of Eren’s top brass like yesterday, and that fat uncle was also standing among them gnashing his teeth at me.

King Cecello sat smilingly on his throne on the platform.

Beauty that disregarded the fact that he already had 5 children, his aquamarine eyes shone with charming light like precious stones. He looked satisfied when he saw me putting on his gift of luxurious dress.

Oooooohhh! He couldn’t possibly be thinking of how I would be taking it off, could he? This perverted King!

The throne besides his was empty, most definitely as it was for the Queen – that was, myself.

Besides the two thrones, stood the King’s children.

Prince Ryuujу was red-faced and frowning, his fists squeezed tightly at me. Princess Seira hugged that huge tome, staring at me with an undecipherable expression. Prince Shin looked like he was asleep. Princesses Sarasa and Orie winked and signalled at me in secret, both looking as cute as angels in high spirit.

I nearly fainted from the tightness the corset was gripping my chest.

King Cecello happily announced.

“Then, let me introduce my wife.”

Oh no!

Really wished I could see that adorable and kind maid one last time.

King Cecello’s eyes clouded over like a lustful senior teasing a new female employee, smiling as he stood.

My mind was filled with white bridal veils, Southern tropical island honeymoon, and princess-carry by the sea-side, and my skin nearly broke out into chicken-pox.

Uwwwwwaaaaahhhh!!! I DON’T WANT TO PUT ON A GOWN AND GET MARRIED TO ANOTHER MAN!!!

In my panic, I uttered.

“I-I have athlete’s foot!”

Good, I would fight!

“My feet are full of blisters and sores! And they stink!”

People and the room seemed to be spinning in my confusion, and I kept shouting even in the midst of the light-headedness caused by the tight corset.

“The shoes – once they are off – would stink to the skies! Even the cockroaches would run! Everyone calls me a bio-weapon!”

At that instance, the great hall became as silent as a cemetery at night.

The King was frozen where he stood, and so were his children, the princes and princesses.

Slowly, whispers swept across all who were present like a wave on the sea.

“Ms Glinda... has athlete’s foot?”

“The unmatched genius has athlete’s foot?”

“And they stink?”

The opinion of Glinda obviously fell.

This might enrage Glinda, but my concern at the moment was only to protect my own chastity.

King Cecello recovered quickly, and said with a smile.

“Then, tonight I would ask someone to send some foot medication over.”

Oooooooooohhhhh! It didn’t work!

As expected of the Heroic King who disregarded all opinions and did away with the policy of isolation for Eren! Even athlete’s foot was unable to drive him away! No, maybe that was even his preference! That’s right! He really looked like he had a thing for ladies with athlete’s foot!

As I sunk deeper into despair, King Cecello lifted his hand.

Huh? Strange? But I was standing over here, so why was he pointed at the other side?

As I felt suspicions, I suddenly saw a lady coming out while carefully cradling a little baby clad in soft baby clothes.

This girl had raven-coloured hair neatly tied, clad in pure and elegant evening dress, slim frame, and gentle demeanour...

Huh? Why...

Why was the maid that I encountered cradling a baby and wearing a lavish gown?

And, why was she exchanging such heatedly warm gazes with King Cecello?

King Cecello took hold of the baby in her arms, and lovingly planted a kiss on the child's forehead.

"Ms Glinda."

"Y-Yes!"

Being suddenly called, my body froze, but King Cecello shone the happiest, gentlest smile I had ever seen as he said.

"This is Queen Yuki, and... everyone, this is Eren Kingdom's 4th Princess, Suzuna Phyllis!"

I stood stunned and lost at sea in the midst of the hall of loud applauses and cheering.

Queen? Wife of the King?

Queen? So that was the wife of the King?

That's to say, the Queen was the wife of the King, the maid was the Queen, and that was the pretty-boy King's wife, so the one who had been wearing an apron...

The maid... No, Queen shone me a glowing smile.

“Greetings once again, Teacher Glinda, please show us your guidance. If there is any issue, please look for me. I really wish to become friends with Teacher Glinda.”



Why was the Queen disguised as a maid?

The Queen herself prepared cucumber sandwiches and strawberry tarts for me? And even served them to me?

Or hadn't the Queen passed away?

And Princesses Sarasa and Orie said that Glinda had been invited to Eren in order to become the King's new Queen!

I turned my head towards the twin Princesses, just to see their twitching lips, lightly fidgeting bodies and eyes filled with mirth.

Soon after, they could no longer hold it in, and went "Piff!" bent over in laughter.

"Pfff! Hehehehe! T-take a look at her expression!"

"So adorable! And funny! Hahahaha!"

"Sarasa, no, I can't take it any more! My tummy's aching from the laughter, aching!"

"Hahahaha! Me too, Orie! I can't take it any more!"

The two of them bowed forward and backward, laughing until tears came out of their eyes.

It was then that I realised.

I had been tricked by the twins!

Saying that the Queen was no longer in this world since 5 years ago, that there was special meaning to men holding the hands of women in Eren, and also that I had been chosen as the Queen candidate... Lies, all of them!

I guessed my face must have been fuming.

The two angels... no, little devils heard their father asking "What

was so funny”, and chose to pretend that nothing was amiss.

“Sorry, Lord Father, I am just so happy to have someone like Glinda as our Teacher.”

“Yes, I am just laughing because I am too happy, too glad. Sarasa likes Glinda a lot, Lord Father.”

“Orie too.”

Both girls had on their faces expressions as pure as angels. Even though they were just eight years old, their skills in trickery and acting were top-notch and could probably deceive any man.

Something snapped in my head.

I might had been a housekeeping NEET and failed college-exam student, Glinda’s useless little brother and a cross-dressing pathetic fool twice-dumped.

Ooohh! Right! In the eyes of royalty and the nobles, I was as good as the lowest flea of society! Like a broken toy easily cast aside! Like a leaf of parsley for garnishing! Like an apple pie with no apple fillings! Like a shoe with a holed sole! Or an old uncle’s nostril hairs! Sand covered by cat’s urine!

Even so, I was still qualified to teach precocious children what was right and wrong! Trying to make fun of an adult? You were 10 years too young!

I could no longer conceal my wrath.

Blood rushed towards my head, my ears fumed.

I walked towards the two little devils in angel disguises that were still-trembling in laughter.

Then, I grabbed one of them by the waist, lifted her up, and “smack” spanked her bottom.

“Ah! What are you doing!”

“Sarasa!”

I did not stop, but continued to spank twice, thrice.

“Why I am doing this, both of you know well enough! Be it village children or princesses, naughty kids must be spanked!”

Pop! Smack! Spanking sounds and cries of the Princess echoed through the great hall.

“Ahhh! Hurt! Pain! Help me! Lord Father! Queen Mother!”

The top officials all around had their jaws dropping to the ground, Prince Ryuuju fearfully stepped back, even Princess Seira widened her eyes. Prince Shin fearfully ran to the back of his Mother and tucked at her skirt.

The Queen was dumb-founded, and beside her, King Cecello smiled, saying.

“Oh? Looks like Ms Glinda is a strict teacher.”

I put Princess Sarasa, who was weeping from the pain and shame, onto the ground, and turned towards Princess Orie who had fallen in fear trembling.

“Alright! It’s your turn!”

“Sssssorrry!!!”

Princess Orie had a face of terror, rearing on the floor.

“P-please, forgive me... Forgive me... Teacher... Ahhhh!”

“There are many things in this world that can’t be resolved just with an apology, your Highness!”

Smack!

A loud sound resonated from below my palm.

“Uuuu!”

“Remember this with your body, the consequences of playing tricks on people!”

“Uuuuuuu! Sorry! Sorry! Sorry!”

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Loud sounds.

The cries of little girls.

Dumb-founded top officials and nobles.

It was some time later that I heard that horns had really sprouted from my head, and a pair of fiery-red bat-like wings from my back, fire blazed from my eyes, and I had looked so fierce that an army of ten-thousand men would have fled at the sight of me.

“Genius Lady Glinda spanked the Princesses of Eren!”

This became the headlines of the newspapers all over the world a few days later.

The me of then could not have known about it but in the hall filled with fear and violence, only the little baby Princess Suzuna Phyllis could sleep soundly in peace.

“Look at you now! Apologising in tears, huh! How unlike a Princess! Adults are no targets for your pranks!”

“Uwaaaaah! I won’t do it ever again!”

What should I do, I actually did it.

An hour later, I was still clad in the luxurious evening gown, seated cross-legged on the bed and wrapped in a blanket, pale in fear.

When I realised I had been tricked by the twin Princesses, I lost my head and acted without considering the consequences.

To actually spank their bottoms in front of the King, the Queen and all the other officials, not even stopping when they pleaded crying, and telling them not to “take adults for fools!”, uuwaaaah!

It was only after returning to the silence of my room that I began to feel fear for what I had just done.

In the past there had been cases where punishments were dealt out for merely stepping onto the shadows of royalty, or beating royalty to eating a madeleine.

My thoughtless actions might cause fractures in the relationship of Winstoria and Eren, and I would thus be hung for treason.

Sigh, what a short life.

I had thought that since I was different from Glinda, I might as well just become an ordinary college student, get a job as a civil servant, and marry like a commoner, and then, around 75 years old, surrounded by children and grandchildren, kiss goodbye to my ordinary life.

At least let me live till I could grow a beard, please.

While I was sunk in this tragic mood, sounds of knocking came from the door.

“!”

I jumped in fright.

Here they came! The executioner was here!

“Teacher Glinda, may I enter?”

I was lifting my skirt trying to hide in the closet when I heard this gentle voice.

It's the maid... no, the Queen.

“Sh-shure!”

I had wanted to say “sure”, but the tightness in my throat distorted it.

The door opened, and the Queen entered while cradling Princess Suzuna.

When she beheld both my feet inside of the closet, her large eyes widened slightly.

“Is Teacher cleaning the room?”

“N-no, it's just a rare butterfly that has flown into the room, and I wanted to capture it... Haha, looks like it has fled.”

I stammered out an explanation, and then, turning towards the Queen, bowed my head in submission.

“That, j-j-just now, I plead forgiveness for my impudence before so many high-ranking lords and nobles!”

“Ara, please don't say that, Teacher.”

The Queen became somewhat frantic.

As I peeked up trembling, I saw the Queen looking at me with a look of discomfort.

“The one who ought to apologise is I. Hadn't Sarasa and Orie played a prank on Teacher? Otherwise Teacher would not be so angry.”

“Ehh, That is... that...”

How would I possibly dare say that I had thought the Queen dead, and that I had been called over to be the Queen Candidate, or even thought of His Majesty as a perverted senior?

The Queen gave me a deep bow.

“Really sorry. Teacher Glinda is our honoured guest after all.”

I was stunned speechless.

“N-no such thing! Please don’t be like this! I-I can’t accept this! It is my immaturity, going too far like this.”

“No, everyone in the palace has been bothered by Sarasa and Orie’s mischief, but since they are princesses, no one has dared to discipline them strictly. This time is a good warning for them, and even His Majesty said so. He said that it has been the right thing to appoint Ms Glinda as our children’s tutor, since you have taught our children so much in just a day.”

“This is what His Majesty said?”

While it was strange for a father to feel glad watching his daughters being spanked, I breathed a sigh of relief as I thought I would definitely be executed.

“So please don’t say that you want to leave Eren. A teacher like Glinda who wouldn’t show partiality to royalty is the one we need as the tutor to our children.”

The Queen looked me in the eye seriously and said honestly.

“I would also work hard to take good care of Teacher.”

“R-right, why does Your Majesty disguise as a maid?”

The Queen displayed a gentle look when she heard this.

“Because it is too difficult to bake and do housework when putting on a formal evening gown and it is easier to work when dressed like that.”

“But, the Queen of a Kingdom doesn’t usually have to do housework...”

When I remembered her rolling off the roof from sunning the blankets, and even getting lost while trying to clean the windows, confusion fell upon me.

Besides, was she really old enough to be the Mother of all those Princes and Princesses? She looked as if she was just sixteen or so. Prince Ryuujyu was eleven this year... When did she first give birth? Was she really the Queen of this kingdom?

“That... I have heard that the Queen of Eren was praised as a goddess... Truly did not expect that to be Your Majesty...”

The Queen blushed red in an instant.

“Ara, that is just some random talk by everyone, I am certainly nobody remarkable. I get lost all the time, break the bowls, confuse flour with cement powder... it really isn’t so. Uuoo, uooo... Sorry to disappoint Teacher.”

Seeing her apologising with clouded eyes, I replied befuddled.

“No, I am not disappointed. In fact, I like Her Majesty who dresses as a maid, as it feels more approachable.”

My face turned red as I said this.

Her Majesty rubbed tears off the corners of her eyes and smiled happily.

“Thank you, Teacher Glinda.”

It was a smile that skewered though my heart.

I truly liked the You who was a maid.

But these words could no longer be uttered.

At this, Princess Suzuna who was being cradled in Her Majesty’s chest smiled adorably.

Slowly, like the fragrance dispersed by flowers, a bright smile bloomed...

A tiny hand reached towards me.

“Hoho, She must be trying to greet Teacher.”

I cautiously reached out a finger too to touch her smooth white skin.

Nervously holding the tiny fingers, I muttered while mesmerized.

“... How soft.”

A pair of red tea-like coloured amber round eyes gawked at me.

The Queen said while smiling.

“That’s because she has nothing. Her body and soul is as soft as pure white dough.”

She said in an elegant and touching voice.

“Small babies are lovable existences. When showered with love by everyone around them, pure hearts also fill up gradually, slowly growing... until they become existences that can offer love to others.”

I gently shook Princess Suzuna’s white hand and she laughed happily. Her Majesty beheld all this as a warm smile floated onto her lips.

“I wish that even as this child grows into adulthood, her spirit would be strong enough to not just only accept love, but to retain her innocence from birth. That’s why she is named Suzuna (“seven bells”). This is the name that Teacher Glinda inspired me to name her.”

“Eh?”

I was stunned by the Queen’s soft words and dropped eyes.

“Hasn’t Teacher said that she likes the tambourine?”

“That’s because I am so dumb that I can only shake the tambourine.”

Her Majesty shook her head at my blushing face and said.

“Does Teacher know what the meaning behind each of the seven bells on the tambourine?”

“Errr... The first is love, the second is courage, the third is dream... The fourth is... eh...”

“The fourth is hope, the fifth is promise, the sixth is peace, and the last one, is truth.”

The Queen finished as if singing a song.

Then she continued in a firm but gentle voice.

“Every one of these precepts is very important, but through the process of growing up, it becomes difficult to remain in love and to have dreams. It is easy to just say “love” honestly while young, but as you grow older, it becomes more difficult, right? So it is not that the tambourine is so trivial that only children can play. Rather, it is only the children that can bring out the lovely music from tambourines.”

Princess Suzuna continued to laugh in the Queen’s chest in a voice both innocent and heart-warming like the clear sounds of bells.

“Suzuna means “Seven bells” in my home-town. I hope that she could safeguard the meaning of the seven bells in her heart and continue to produce lovely songs forever. This is the first blessing that His Majesty and I bestow upon this child.”

Hoho, this was a really good name.

I thought so too.

Laughter that sounded like bells was so befitting of this little

Princess.

Just then, Princess Suzuna appeared somewhat uncomfortable.

“Ara? What is it? I have already changed her diapers and fed her too.”

The Queen gently cradled the baby Princess.

“Why not sing her a song?”

I said carelessly.

“Yes, when I knocked my head against the bathtub earlier, Your Majesty sang for me too, so please let me hear it again.”

I so wanted to listen to the song again now.

The Queen became as embarrassed as a young girl.

“That is a lullaby of Eren.”

“Isn’t it just the right thing for this moment then?”

“There’s a point there...”

Then, while she gently cradled Princess Suzuna, she started to sing.

“The Dragon watcheth over Seven doors;

Door of Water from which birth springeth,

Door of Light bearing God’s name,

Door of Earth which all-encompasseth,

Door of Fire that burneth away the soul,

Door of Flowers which confesseth love,

Door of the Night which summoneth beginning and the end.

Every Door is guardeth by the Dragon.

So sleep well, my lovely child”

What a chaste, soothing sound.

When I first listened to this song, why had I not noticed that she was the Queen?

Everyone knew that the Queen of Eren was a famed singer known as the Goddess of Prayer.

Until a mere ten years ago, this kingdom was still until a state of isolation, and no black-haired people lived here.

The one who opened the kingdom up to the outside world was the previous king's younger brother of a different mother – that was King Cecello of now. And for Him who became known as the Sky Drake, a black-haired foreign lady stood at his side.

This raven-haired young girl appeared all of a sudden one day from a faraway country, and she was an extremely good singer, who touched the multitudes into opening the gardens of their hearts with her prayer-like gentle songs.

Like this, the 'Isolated Kingdom' Eren opened her doors, and the Wise King Cecello was born.

After that, the young girl became the King's wife, and Mother of his children, and even today was companion of the Sky Drake, living happy lives together.

It was a story as beautiful as the fables of old.

But, listening to this wondrously beautiful melody, any fable could become believable.

All unrest, anger and anxiety melted into the warm notes and disappeared.

“The Dragon watcheth over Seven doors;
May the Blue Sky shineth bright,
May the Deep Sea sleepeth at peace,
May the Earth be covered in flowers,
May the Hearts of Children be filled with hope eternal,
So sleep well, my lovely child”

Princess Suzuna closed her eyes and let out steady breathes.

The weeping faces of Princesses Sarasa and Orie peeked from behind the door. The two little fox cubs which had pranked on me earlier now listened attentively to the lovely song.

Prince Ryuuju, Princess Seira, and even the young Prince Shin were there as well.

The pouting heir-to-the-throne, cold-eyed eldest princess, the second prince who could only be said to be quiet or dull, every one of these children had innocent expressions, drowned in the spellbinding song and aura.

Each child listened as if hypnotised with a face of joy.

Them aside, I who was granted this opportunity to listen to the songs of a legendary singer at such close distance could only feel peace and delight.

Tomorrow might be another day of hardship; mayhap I would make another mistake and wish to hide into the closet again.

But it might not be so bad to stay for a while longer.

Right, it probably would not be too before Helmut brought Glinda back.

In this lovely evening after the earlier turbulence, I laid myself down to rest on the soft bed, my ears still hearing the songs of the Goddess of Prayers.

“Uww! What a bright morning!”

The next day, I stuffed myself into the corset, dressed up and tidied my bed-hair.

Today was the first day of class.

Despite the discomfort in my heart, I must do what I could.

Just as I walked optimistically along the corridor...

“... Teacher.”

A monotonous voice halted me from around the corner.

Holding the thick old tome closely to her chest, Princess Seira looked at me with her cold amethyst eyes.

“G-good morning, what is it?”

I was bad at dealing with this child.

The lovely 9 year old Princess asked me who was trying to lift both corners of my lips.

“Why is Teacher cross-dressing?”

Chapter 04

“Then, to gauge your current knowledge, I have decided to give you a simple test.”

I ignored the protests of Princesses Sarasa and Orie and set a stack of test papers on the table, all while a sickly pallor and sweating profusely.

This was the first day of my pretending to be my famed, genius twin sister and taking on her role of as the tutor to the royal family in Eren Kingdom.

Right until this morning was I still feeling optimistic, thinking that even a failed college-entry exam student like me should be capable of teaching kids between 5 to 11 years old.

But...

“Teacher, why do you cross-dress?”

The eldest Princess who seemed to have been lying in wait for me along the corridor stared coldly at me and asked with a calm voice.

I was shocked into taking a step backwards, nearly falling over.

She had discovered that I am male? So had she really discovered THAT part of me when I knocked my head against the bathtub?

“W-w-w-w-what, what can you possibly mean? To suspect that I’m not a girl just because I am flat, it is so hurtful. I have been a woman ever since I was born, uhohoho.”

I tried to laugh it away.

“Sorry, but to maintain health and a shapely body, I have a habit of running in the morning!”

So saying, I fled as if flying.

Due to my shorted nerves, I ran all around the palace and nearly got lost.

During breakfast, I sat and ate with the royal family, but Princess Seria's eyes seemed to be appraising me all the time, making me hard to swallow.

"Is this not to Teacher Glinda's taste?" The Queen in maid costume asked me anxiously (it seemed that the Queen Mother had prepared breakfast herself).

"N-No, I am just testing a diet supplement and collecting data, so this morning I have to limit my food intake."

I gave some random excuse.

"Is that so? But Teacher looks pretty unwell, and keeps sweating."

"Must have been the side-effects of the medication, ohoohoo..."

Princess Seira kept looking at our exchange with sage-like eyes.

Until even now.

Uwwuuu, she was still here, staring at me, staring... staring without changing direction for even an instance...

I laid down the stack of test papers, doing my utmost to avoid meeting the eldest princess' gaze.

What should I do if she suddenly jumped up and said, "This person's a man, not Ms Glinda."?

My brain was filled with the terrifying headlines of "Broken alliance, Political criminal, Deceiver of the Royal family", and I nearly broke down into pieces.

Peeked slightly around...

Whoa! She's still staring!

If only I had been a masochistic lolicon, this might had turned out to be an ideal situation. Then, perhaps I would be very excited at being forced to cross-dress and coldly glared at by a purple-eyed, silver haired young girl who was as lovely as a western doll.

Unfortunately, I prefer cute ordinary girls of sixteen to seventeen.

So, in the face of Princess Seira's silent interrogation, my weak intestines would just cringe.

Ohhh, what could she possibly be thinking about? Probably silently cursing "This cross-dressing pervert" from the bottom of her heart. Uwwuuu, ooooh, please stop glaring at me.

I felt as if I had become the pathetic Emperor Ludwig the Second who got dragged before court on charges of seducing his minister's wife. Right, that Emperor seemed to have choked to death on a crab bun in prison.

Ahhh, this was no time to be sharing useless historical anecdotes!

Right, I should just concentrate on the maths lesson.

Within the nursery with brightly illuminated window curtains and wall-paper, the desk was seated with not just Princess Seira, but also those twin Princesses Sarasa and Orie, their elder brother Prince Ryuuju, and the young Prince Shin.

The twins were currently sulking unhappily due to their protests against the pop-test being rejected; Prince Ryuuju tightened his lips and refused to look at me; and Prince Shin looked sleepy as usual today.

The test-papers had been prepared by Helmut, with the difficulty levels adjusted according to their age. Helmut had a "sincere" smile on his face as he explained that it would be a trivial task to just pretend to teach by pointing out the problems that the children had

difficulty in.

Princess Seira lowered her head and began to start writing.

I let out a breath of relief.

My heart continued to hammer like a drum against my chest. Muah, this was no condition to be teaching normally. But should I say anything wrong by mistake, my fake identity as Glinda might be unveiled.

I gave a reluctant smile.

“If there’s anything that seems too hard, you can just ask me.”

Seeing the tensed back and overly-serious face of Prince Ryuuju attempting each question, I walked behind him and said kindly.

“Is anything the matter, Prince Ryuuju?”

Prince Ryuuju violently retreated causing his chair to rock loudly. He frowned red-faced and glared at me in guard.

“D-don’t stand behind me!”

“... Sorry.”

“A-a-a-a-and, isn’t your collar cut a little too low? Ladies should not expose too much of their skin!”

Most likely it had been due to my falling atop of him in the corridors last night, he seemed to have taken me completely for a female pervert. Then again, was this what a child who just reached 11 years old would say? Strange?

Prince Ryuuju’s test script was filled in words and numbers as teeny as an insect, making me wonder “is there really such a need to be so serious about it?” It exhibited his earnestness and meticulousness.

“Really, Elder Brother Ryuuju is too mindful of Glinda ~~~!”

“That’s right, even his face has become swollen red. Could it be love at first sight?”

The Princess Sarasa and Orie teased their Elder Brother.

“P-preposterous! There’s no such thing! I just felt that she should not be overdressed to teach...”

“Oh really? Elder Brother Ryuuju must have been concentrating so much at Glinda’s chest that he can’t think of anything else?”

“N-no way!”

Prince Ryuuju’s flushed face blazed, and his frown deepened.

I couldn’t help but cover my chest. Due to the low-cut collar, I feared for my pads to be discovered.

“See? Even Glinda feels uncomfortable all over from your stares!”

“T-there’s no such thing!”

“No! I have absolutely no interest in your chest!”

“Y-yes, sorry, but it seems like all my clothes have low-cut collars...”

That Helmut, why did he only prepare clothes that could so easily expose my male identity? Was this a part of his extremely low-classed taste? If it was someone else who was wearing this, maybe I too would enjoy the view. But to put it on myself... Uwuuuwuu...

Twin princesses danced about like a pair of birds.

“It had to be in-fashion to wear low-cut this year! Winstoria Empire after all is the world-centre of culture and fashion!”

“That’s right, Orie.”

The two of them held each other’s hands overly excitedly. It was

just last night that they had been weeping from being spanked. What a quick restoration... ah, well. But both your scripts were still blank!

“Humph! Who cares about fashion. Rather than wasting time on make-up, it’s more important to discipline the insides.”

Prince Ryuuju declared un-amusedly.

“Ha! No matter how good your inside is, if your outward appearance is crappy, nobody would even approach you, and there won’t even be any chance to show off your good points!”

“Sarasa’s right! Besides, the pursuit of fashion and beauty is every girl’s inborn character. If Big Brother Ryuuju remains so ignorant of the hearts of women, it would be difficult later when you actually inherit the throne. For example, when dealing with the king of another kingdom, which is more effective as gifts, precious stones for the opponent’s wife or lovers? Right, Sarasa?”

“Telling me to resort to bribery? I absolutely refuse! It’s because of people like you two that politics becomes so seedy! How can women be allowed into the sacred task of managing a country!”

“You are so gullible, Big Bro Ryuuju! Creatures known as men have absolutely no means of refusing if a beautiful lady is to flirtatiously ask him ‘Pleaaaase?’ ~~ ”

“Nah, Sarasa. Big Bro Ryuuju who becomes shy from merely looking at Glinda’s chest can’t even be considered a man yet.”

“W-w-what! I am not shy! And I have said so earlier, I have no interest in chest!”

“There’s no need to hide it, for someone as pure as Big Bro Ryuuju: your heart is written on your face.”

“Shut up! Sarasa! Orie!”

This group of kids made a non-stop din.

Prince Ryuujuu had obviously become a toy to the twin Princesses, and as a male personally, I could not help but empathise with him. Girls were certainly eloquent or precocious... Even while I was in elementary school, I was often teased by the girls in my class...

“T-that, exam is still in progress. Please be quiet and answer your scripts.”

I warned while shaken, and the Princesses Sarasa and Orie replied adorably in unison.

“Ok!”

Prince Ryuujuu turned red when he heard this, probably because he felt that he should have been setting an example for his younger siblings, but just added to the din instead. Embarrassed at his actions, he shook his head angrily and continued his test.

But the twins started chatting again not long after.

“Ask you something, Glinda, what hairstyle is currently in fashion at Winstoria Empire right now?”

“Have you watched the new show by Bilger Bauer? Did the actress playing the elven queen really descended from the sky?”

“Is the Emperor of Winstoria Empire handsome?”

“Disgusting! Sarasa just loves old uncles! I want to know about the Prince of Winstoria Empire. Heard that he is about our age, so what is the colour of his eyes and hair?”

“Muah, boys of the similar age are just children, I’m certainly not interested. Men must be strong, intelligent and reliable, just like our Lord Father.”

“Lord Father is exceptional.”

“Does Orie think so too?”

“Of course.”

“Oh, Glinda, that accessory looks so pretty.”

“Is that a gift of your boyfriend?”

“How many boyfriends do you have (as in, right now)?”

The two of them bombarded me with mature question.

Prince Ryuujу screamed in impatience.

“Quiet! Boyfriends and whatnots are so pointless! Before looking for men, you should just pick up the education and character befitting of daughters of royalty!”

“Alright, continue your exams.”

I said to defuse the outburst.

Was this called teaching? Wasn’t this more like being a nanny? I was beginning to have gastric pains when...

“... Teacher.”

Wah!

Being called at by this calm voice sent a chill up my spine.

“I have completed the problems.”

“Huh? So quickly?”

“It’s boring to idle around, so many I read my book?”

“P-please do so.”

Princess Seira opened her ancient tome.

Right, she had been holding onto the book for a while now, just

what was inside of it?

I carelessly peeked over...

“!”

And froze over.

W-what! The book was covered in equations and ancient writings! There was practically no empty page, and the words-filled paper was a wicked black from the ink, un-undecipherable at all!

“Ha... Hahaha... What book could this possibly be?”

I asked with a dry laugh, and Princess Seira casually replied.

“... The Mathematical Theorems from ancient Anabel civilization.”

“I-is that so, the Anabel civilization huh, that’s the one with pyramids and animalism, right? I was thinking was that really the one, hahaha... C-can you understand it?”

“... Yes. Because the grammar isn’t really that different from modern tongues. The theorems that Ophelit put forth 2000 years ago is still so applicable today, how marvellous.”

“... O-ophelit... That’s the legendary ancient genius huh... hahaha... ya, yeah that’s true... So you can really read these ancient texts so easily...”

Was I not here simply just to teach 5 to 11 year olds?

Helmut said that, just like teaching at an elementary school, even a college-exam failure like me could easily take on this task.

I had heard nothing about the eldest Princess knowing how to read ancient texts and even casually discuss Ophelit’s theorems!

W-what should I do? If she asked me any questions...

“Teacher, regarding Ophelit’s proposal...”

As if observing my reactions, Princess Seira stared at me with her purple crystal-like eyes, pointing to a line of mathematics with her thin finger.

Not good!

“Prrrrrrriiiinnnnceeee Shin!”

I screamed, turning to look at the youngest Prince Shin.

“Is there anything that confused Prince Shin?”

What if even Prince Shin was a genius that could speak in fluent ancient tongues and easily formulate a pile of equations?

But, Prince Shin was kneading clay.

He did not look like he was playing, but with the concentrating expression of a craftsman at work, was seriously kneading the clay.

“...Prince Shin?”

“...”

“What are you doing?”

“... Secret.”

“... Is that so? Then go ahead”

“...”

He sombrely nodded.

Fueh... Luckily he was no genius.

But... For a child of 5 to emit an air of a craftsman and knead clay with a serious face... That was a little out of the ordinary...

What an awkward atmosphere.

Prince Ryuuju completed his test, the twin princesses just said nonchalantly, “I did work hard, it’s just that I really don’t know the answer ~”, “Orie feels the same. ~“

How horrid, if this was the result of the first day alone, Glinda’s rating would definitely drop, and Princess Seira might even say, “This Teacher is obviously an imitation! Unbelievable! How horrible!” Then, if they let their King Father learn of it, I might even be executed... Noooo! I must heat up the atmosphere!

“T-then, I would mark the papers later. Everyone, let’s have a game!”

Hearing my desperate proposal, the children froze.

“Glinda, what game do you want to play?”

“Board games.”

Ten minutes later, a stack of board games from the Winstoria Empire was laid on the carpet of the nursery.

These were gifts to the King of Eren, all custom crafted by famed artists and could be considered pieces of art.

“Wow! There’re so many stars on this one here, so pretty ~”

“This one is called “The Journey of stars”. Oh, so romantic.”

“This one is called “Exploring Lost History”, it’s to hunt treasures from ancient ruins around the world!”

Princesses Sarasa and Orie looked at the game-boards with eyes sparkling.

“The Winstoria Empire has many board-games for educational purposes, and children of the Empire learn about history, astronomy and morals from these board games.”

“How interest ~ So, which board game should we play?”

“This one, “Princess Flora’s conversations – Within the Forest of Philosophy” looks fun; it’s to guide Princess Flora and Charming Philosopher on their discussion on philosophy and romance, to become the 1st female pope in the world.”

“Oh... That... That looks like it has been aimed towards teenage girls, it may be a little too early for Your Highnesses...”

I seemed to have remembered many scenes of kissing and hugging, contentious scenarios... say, why were such things mixed in here?

“I am not going play such childish board games.”

Prince Ryuuju crossed his arms about his chest and turned away.

I bent over to persuade him.

“Don’t say that, at least have a try. Keeping in touch with the culture of other countries is a good experience for Princes too. I recommend “The Coloured History of the World”, and “Shaking the World ~Creation of Land and Skies”, “I will be an Agricultural King!”, “Path of the Great King”...”

“... Great King?”

Prince Ryuuju’s shoulders jumped violently.

“Yes, this game teaches step by step the politics, experiences and trials, to become a Great King.”

“I-is that so, then I would try playing a little...”

He replied with a blush.

What should I say... this child was so pure.

“Then let’s play “Path of the Great King”.”

Princesses Sarasa and Orie complained unhappily that “Aww, that’s so boring.”, “Let’s play more romantic games”, but I consoled them with “I will let you choose the next time.”

Sigh, I had totally become a nanny.

Princess Seira still stared straight at me, as if observing.

“P-princess Seira, would you like to join us?”

I asked her stiffly.

“... Alright.”

She calmly answered as if somewhat unhappily.

I asked Prince Shin the same question.

“...”

He merely nodded in silence.

Uwuwuwu... why was it that these siblings were either too noisy or too quiet... so extreme...

That said, we somehow managed to begin our board game.

We spread out the colourful game board on the carpet, and everyone sat on the ground in a circle.

“First, we throw two dice and add their numbers together.”

“Six.” Said Prince Ryuuju.

“Mine’s three.” Princess Sarasa said.

“Mine’s eight.” Princess Orie said.

“... Four.” Princess Seria said.

“...”

“Oh, Prince Shin threw a Ten. Then, counting from the highest to lowest we decide the starting points of everyone, Prince Shin’s is “Palace”, Princess Orie’s is “Church”, Prince Ryuuju’s is “Martial-arts Hall”, Princess Seira’s is “Stables” and Princess Sarasa’s is “Wolf’s Den”. Please place your game-pieces dolls at their respective starting areas.”

I handed everyone their porcelain doll game-pieces.

“Tsk... Why am I in the Wolf’s Den? What is the Wolf’s Den anyway! And this doll’s hair is so messy, with such a fierce expression, not cute at all!”

Princess Sarasa said unhappily.

“That’s because the doll’s character had been abandoned as a baby in the woods, and was raised by wolves.”

“Humph...”

“My doll is clad in a white, so elegant.”

“Princess Orie’s character has been abandoned as a baby behind the church’s altar.”

“Why is everyone an abandoned child? What about Shin’s “Palace”?”

“That character is a Prince born inside of the Palace.”

“Huh! Only Shin’s so fortunate! Unfair! And I am even brought up by wolves, so unfair!”

“Hey, why is my doll’s hair tied with ribbons? This is obviously a girl!”

Prince Ryuuju was also displeased.

“That’s because Prince Ryuujuu’s character is a daughter in the Martial Arts house.”

“What did you say?”

“... Teacher, what about me?” Princess Seira looked at me and asked monotonously.

I fearfully replied.

“Uh, Princess Seira’s character is the child of a travelling troupe, born in the stable of a nearby village while returning from performances somewhere.”

“... Is that so.” She coolly replied.

There was no clue on her face over whether she liked or disliked her character.

“Then let’s begin! Alright, Prince Shin, please throw the dice first.”

I faked an optimistic air, and worked hard to overturn the disappointed atmosphere.

“Three! Please move forward three steps. Ok, a choice question: To celebrate the Prince’s birthday, the ministers brought a Book of Law while the knights’ captain brought a beautiful Sword. Please choose one among them?”

“What, choose only one? So stingy!”

“Isn’t the Prince just born? How can he decide for himself?”

Princesses Sarasa and Orie scoffed in order.

“Muah, it is just a game. So, Prince Shin? Which would you choose?”

“... Big.”

“... That would be the Sword.”

The doll in a cape moved forward.

Next was the turn of Princess Orie who grew up in the Church and the dice rolled a Four.

“Ok, Princess Orie also had a choice question: The clergy prepared Wheat Bread and Cake, which would you choose to eat?”

“Cake, of course.”

“There’s another question: Just when you are about to eat, a hungry child entered, would you feed the child or eat it yourself?”

“Eat it myself, of course.”

Like this, everyone advanced through the game.

Princess Sarasa who grew up in the Wolf’s Den seemed to keep encountering choice questions like: “A Rabbit and a Wild Boar were ahead, which animal will you hunt for tonight’s dinner?”, “In the forest, an armoured knight lies dying, help him or bite him?”; These types of scenarios.

Prince Ryuuju’s Daughter of Martial Arts on the other hand kept encountering questions such as: ”A young knight comes inn-trashing, duel him?” To which he puffed out his chest and said: ”Of course.” Then, the follow-up choices were: ”You and the knight fell head-over-heels in love, elope with the knight?”

“I am a dignified Prince! Why would I fall in love and elope with any random man! Isn’t the goal of this board game to become a Great King!?!?”

Prince Ryuuju said in exasperation.

I could totally understand his point of view, being a man myself. Why would anyone want to tie ribbons on his hair, and romance with

other men...

Thinking about my cross-dressing self, I could not help but empathise with him.

Princess Seira expressionlessly moved her game-piece doll which represented the attractive youth of a travelling troupe.

“A corrupt noble of many evils wishes to see your dance. Dance? Or unsheathe your dagger?”

“... Dance.”

“What kinds of dance? Loach Dance or Sword-Dance?”

“... Loach Dance.”

Her replies were always cold.

It was a drastic difference from the twins Princesses and their Elder Brother who made a din every time that they threw the dice, their expressions changing wildly... though one could also say the same of Prince Shin, who seemed to be idling right from the start.

Anyway, Prince Ryuuju and the rest seemed completely engrossed in the game, and by now, it was revealed that the youth who had been brought up by wolves and the one found in the church were in fact twin brothers born of a noble house that had been executed for rebellion.

“Elder Brother Sarasa!”

“Orie! My Little Brother!”

The two of them hugged each other happily in play.

Prince Shin’s character who was supposed to be the heir to the throne simply rotated eating and sleeping each day in indolence. About this time, the love-troubled but diligently-training Martial Artist Girl (Prince Ryuuju) showed up to become a bodyguard knight

to the prince, all while encountering a never-ending train of issues surrounding her love-life.

“Why are ALL my choices between ‘LOVE or WORK’, ‘LOVE or HONOUR’, ‘LOVE or GLORY’?!? Is LOVE the only thing that can be weighed on the scales?”

Prince Ryuujuu shouted with a face puffed in red, but continued to diligently select ‘WORK’, ‘HONOUR’ to advance his status.

The youths from the Church and the Wolf’s Den raised a rebellion with their statuses as the heirs of the Duke’s house.

In the midst of all this, Princess Seira’s young actor moved towards the heart of the country via flattering powerful officials and nobles, becoming even a close aide to the Prince, turning the Prince into his puppet and taking power by means of cloak and dagger.

What was wrong with this board game! Where did these scary scenarios come from! I should have known better and chosen the safer-sounding “Scenes of World History”!

That was apparent when Princess Seira was asked: “Loyally serve the Prince? Or serve Him with ulterior motives?”, the manner in which she calmly answered: “... with ulterior motives.”, was truly terrifying.

If this Prince did not come around soon, He might even end up like the Eighth King of Romancia, Louis the Second who was brought before the guillotine by his own close-aide!

But Prince Shin just continued his rotatory eating-and-sleeping lifestyle. Sigh... He was really shaping-up into the path of the useless ruler.

As the story went on, the Martial-Arts-Girl-turned-Knight encountered her Destiny.

In fact, the girl had been the illegitimate child of the King, and the

younger sister of the Prince from a different mother!

Even though this was a ludicrous scenario, the young girl became the Kingdom's 2nd heir-to-the-throne, even leading the country into victory against the rebels and becoming a great hero.

"Wait a second! Doesn't that make us the Bad Guys?"

"Ya! How frustrating!"

"That is the path you two have chosen. If you have chosen virtue, putting the commoners before self, you would have naturally gained their support."

Prince Ryuuju puffed out his chest in satisfaction.

"No matter where the starting point is, the one with royal dignity would ultimately be seated on the throne."

He seemed to have forgotten about all the dismay he previously encountered, smiling satisfactorily. This innocence so befitting of his age was so adorable. Even, even though he was a Prince, he was still a pure ordinary boy.

Prince Ryuuju was not far off from the finishing line. Fight!

But the King suddenly passed on, and rebels attacked the capital.

The young Heroine was about to lead troops when, at this moment, Princess Seira stepped in.

She accused the birthplace of the Heroine as the base of the rebels and persuaded the puppet-prince to send soldiers to attack it.

"Hey! What are you doing! Seira!"

Prince Ryuuju stood frowning.

Princess Seira stared at him coldly and said calmly.

“... I am merely making the ‘right choice’.”

Whoa!~~~ What a cold expression! Her words and expression were nothing like a 9 year old child, how terrifying. I had heart-felt pity for Prince Ryuuju.

“... It is Elder Brother Ryuuju’s turn to throw the dice.”

“Uwwu...”

Prince Ryuuju had a severe expression as he threw the dice.

Five.

Great! He would make it to the finishing line this turn!

But, before he could advance, he was given yet another choice.

“Uh, would you lead your troops to your birthplace? Or to the Capital?”

Prince Ryuuju jumped in fright, shut his lips and clenched his fists. Whoa, he was really thinking hard.

If he went to the Capital and defeat the rebels, he would receive support from the populace and become the King.

If he returned to his hometown, he would be accused of rebellion and be wounded in an attack, sitting out two turns.

Going to the Capital would be the ‘right choice’ in the words of Princess Seira, and perhaps this was to illustrate some of the necessary sacrifices a King would have to eventually make for greater good.

But, it was too cruel to make a child choose such choices.

Was this board game really made for kids? Why would there be such psychologically damaging choice questions within? If it was like this, even winning the game would not bring happiness. Why the

crabbage did you send such a serious board game? Helmut!

Prince Ryuuju tightened his fists in deep concentration, chewing his lips and looking extremely pained.

Ohoh, this child was being too serious!

“That, Prince Ryuuju? It is just a little game, please relax yourself.”

I worriedly advised, but he asked gravely:

“If I were to go to the Capital, would my hometown’s people be all slaughtered as rebels?”

“Er, that may not always be the case, besides this is just a game.”

What a headache. As a teacher, what was I supposed to say at this point of time?

Princess Seira stared straight into me. Uwuwu... so pressurising.

At this time, one of the twin princesses said impatiently:

“Aya! Big Bro Ryuuju is overthinking things! Glinda is right, it’s just a game, so hurry up and go to the finishing line!”

One of the twins, Princess Sarasa, or maybe it was Princess Orie, got up and grabbed Prince Ryuuju’s doll.

“Ok, Five, right? Finishing line~!”

She ended the game all on her own.

“Whoa~~~ Sarasa! What are you doing? The people in my hometown...”

“Humph! Anyway since the doll has reached the finishing point, the game has ended. As promised, this time let us choose a romantic board game!”

“Y-You... No way! That move doesn’t count! I must restart!”

“Ara, really, let’s just consider this Big Bro Ryuujuu’s win.”

“Sarasa agrees! Being a King is so boring; I absolutely don’t want to become one.”

“That’s right, whoever says he wants to become a king must have no dreams at all.”

“Don’t insult the duties of a King! Don’t run away with my doll! Return it at once, Sarasa!”

“Don’t waaannaaa~~”

Princess Sarasa playfully stuck out her tongue towards Prince Ryuujuu while tugging his doll tightly in her chest. The latter rushed towards her with a huff.

“Whoa! No fighting!”

I hastily leaped over in order to jump between the two of them, but tripped and fell.

“Whoa!”

“Wha!”

I fell atop of Prince Ryuujuu.



The Prince Ryuuju crushed under me looked abashed and angry, reddened and trembling from head to toe.

“Ah! Glinda is sooo daring!”

“It must have felt great to be pushed over by Glinda, Big Bro Ryuuju!”

The twins’ cheers made the stricken Prince Ryuuju widen his eyes.

“N-No! This is just an accident! I-i-i-i-i-i-I have absolutely no perverted intentions...”

I stammered out an explanation.

“Impudent fellow! Go away!”

Prince Ryuuju screamed in rage.

Sigh, what a mess.

If this was just the first day of my lessons, how would I ever be able to handle being these children’s private tutor?

Princess Seira continued to simply stare coldly at the frightened me.

Fue, class was finally over.

Afternoon, I returned to my room, and, once alone, threw myself in abandon onto the bed.

A mere short three hours, and yet my body felt as if it had endured three long years.

“I’ve had enough ~~~ Muah, I said I can’t be a private tutor~~~ Helmut, when would you be coming back?!?”

I no longer wished to cross-dress into this stifling, ridiculous dress.

Princess Seira had discovered the truth, and kept giving an

accusatory glare as if to say “You, pervert!”, not to mention that my job as a tutor turned into a mess, with Prince Ryuujuu hating my guts, the twin Princesses not bothering about anything I said, and Prince Shin staring in idle...

As I thought, there was something wrong with making a man like me to pretend to be Glinda.

Was it not said that Winstoria Empire’s Intelligence Agency was so professional that they could locate Glinda in just 3 to 4 days? Was that fellow who just dumped me here and escaped back home really reliable?

Maybe I was abandoned since a long time ago...

Would I have to stay here as a cross-dressing pervert for the rest of my life? Must I shave my legs as long as I live?

As I mulled over my worries, my stomach began to twist and turn in unrest and tears started to flow tragically.

“Uwwuwu... Come back quickly! Helmut!”

As I grasped the bed sheets and cried into it, a sound suddenly came from within the room.

“Excuse me, but do you happen to be lovers with Lord Helmut?”

Chapter 05

I climbed up from the bed immediately.

“!”

I had thought the room empty, but there was in fact a girl in maid get-up, grasping a cleaning rag and standing by the bedside with a nervous face.

Her age was close to mine with a head of thick red hair, and was a big-chested cute young girl.

What? Where had this girl come from?!?

Had I said anything that I should not? Nothing about leg-shaving, I hoped?

And, she even thought that I was lovers with Helmut!

She apologised to the horrified me, and then said.

“My name is Anneth and I work as maid here. I was cleaning the room when you suddenly returned and began talking to yourself while lying on the bed, so I had no chance to announce my presence. I truly have no ill-intentions.”

I blushed when I heard that.

“You... You heard me talking to myself?”

“Yes, I heard your tragic calls for ‘Helmut, Helmut’.”

Wah!

“Watching you pining wholeheartedly for Lord Helmut, I can no longer remain silent.”

“Uwwah! T-t-this has got to be a misunderstanding! I am no lover of Helmut, just like camels and geese can’t possibly fall in love!”

Helmut after King Cecello? Why should there be so many rumours between me and other men? And it had to be THAT seedy fellow! Just the mere thought of him raised goose-bumps on my skin!

Hearing my determined answer, Anneth let out a sigh of relief.

“That is great ~ I have just been thinking: what should I do if you happened to be lovers with Lord Helmut. God, just the mere thought is making my stomach hurt and blood rushing into my head. Ohoohoo, that’s really great.~ ”

She repeated “that’s great” with a reddened face.

Was this girl in love with Helmut?

Wwwwwwhat? For such a cute girl to like that fellow?!?

“When Lord Helmut first came to Eren as a diplomat, every girl working in the palace was asking: ‘who could that gorgeous black-haired man be?’. I was also as if I was struck by a bolt of lightning. What a handsome man, with such elegant voice and smile, and holding even elite status... Superb!”

How disgusting, for a lovely girl like her with such large assets, positive and ordinary demeanour that completely fitted my type, to actually had interest in Helmut!

If you judged based on his appearance alone, Helmut was indeed a handsome elite diplomat, but his true face was that of a cold-blooded swindler who forced innocent young boys into cross-dress before selling them off to foreign countries!

Even if his conduct seemed gentle, he was actually a complete sadist with outrageous attitude, and his insides must definitely be as black as the ink of a squid. As a male myself, I guarantee!

Sigh, what a pity, for such a pretty girl, such an adorable young girl... slightly shorter than myself, with chest large enough to jiggle, eyes that shined with life and cheerful voice...

Helmut that b******, I really wanted to bash him into a bloody pulp, and pull his pants down to reveal half his backside!

“That’s right, from the moment I first laid my eyes on him, I knew he would be a perfect match with His Majesty.”

“Huh?”

This conversation seemed to be going in a strange direction?

“Who did you say is a good match with whom?”

“That is of course Lord Helmut and King Cecello! Just think about it, with His Majesty’s exceptional beauty and charisma, as well as high status, it is truly difficult to find a matching partner, right? And everyone surrounding Him is far too old. His Majesty’s close aide Lord Luther is younger than Him, and looks very cute too, but he is definitely a Bottom no matter how you look at him, so there’s no way to picture him pushing His Majesty over. In my opinion, His Majesty is absolutely, completely a Bottom, and not a Top! That is a point I will never concede!”



What was this girl talking about?

What were the meanings of Top and Bottom? And what was it all about pushing His Majesty over?

Anneth continued in breathless excitement:

“If Lord Helmut and His Majesty were to stand together, the picture becomes perfect, and they would certainly have millions of chances to interact and spar. The pairing of the monarch of a small kingdom and the diplomat of a large empire is also highly attractive, just take for example the other day when Lord Helmut arrived, the two of them immediately locked themselves into a small room. Using the might of Winstoria Empire, the black-hearted Lord Helmut exacted preposterous demands, while His Majesty, shamed and trembling, surrendered for the sake of his people... Magnifique! His Majesty rebuffed at first, but gave in at last to the charms of Lord Helmut after the heat of every steamy night, and is absolutely tortured because of it... Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh! I can’t take it any more!”

××△○××※～～～～～

If you asked me my impressions right then, that was probably how it was like.

Huh? Heat of every steamy night? The King already had the Queen! He so loved His wife that they had 6 kids in total, and the way He laid His eyes on her almost gave Him away as a resident of the Kingdom of Wife-Lovers. How would He ever do something like that with Helmut!

“His Majesty is an ABSOLUTE BOTTOM! You agree too, don’t you?”

“M-mmmmmmmmaybe...”

Under her fascinating appeal, I could not help but felt forced to nod. Just what the peaches did Top and Bottom mean?

Hearing my reply, Anneth grasped my hands with joy all over her cheerful smiling face.

“Right! Right! So happy ~~~ You too support Lord Helmut x His Majesty King Cecello! Cece-Mut is completely heresy, Helmu-Llo is the divine path! Oh, I had just been holding onto the cleaning rag, so I am truly sorry. I had thought that geniuses like Glinda would be far too highbrow for commoners like us, but hey, looks like it isn’t really like that. Can I directly call you ‘Glinda’? You can also just call me ‘Anneth’.”

“Uh... Ok... Anneth...”

“I will focus on expounding on Helmu-Llo this year! I would bring you my next publication the next time I come.”

“Uh... Thanks...”

There was even a publication of it! A book about the hot steamy nights of Lord Helmut x King Cecello!

“Oh no! I still have not completed my chores. See you again, Glinda, if there’s anything that you don’t understand in this castle, just ask me about it! But you must also trade me information of Lord Helmut, His Majesty and Their royal highness (Princes)!”

“Tttttthat, Anneth!”

“What is it?”

“Would you happen to be another relative of His Majesty, or some daughter of the nobles?”

This, after all, was a country where even the Queen put on a maid’s garb and served guests, so it would not be surprising at all if some duke’s daughter was washing the socks.

Anneth gave a little shake, and smiled, saying.

“No way, my family owned a bakery in the city. My home has seven children, and there’s no room in the house, so I came to the palace to work.”

“Bakery?”

“Yes! The bread we baked with cherry and fig is the most delicious!”

Anneth displayed a smile as glorious as the sun, and then left in a hurry.

Prior to coming to Eren, Fleury, that girl who I fell in love with but was rejected by, had also been working in a bakery...

Oh, so Anneth’s family opened a bakery.

This information made me strangely delighted, and my chest began to feel regular beats, but I immediately remembered Anneth’s speech earlier and felt a headache rising.

~~His Majesty is an absolute BOTTOM!

For such a pretty adorable young girl, with such ample assets, warm and cheerful character...

No matter how you looked at her, it was an absolute pity.

“... There seems to be no lack of crazies in this country.”

As Anneth left the room, I gave a shrug and went for a stroll around the courtyard.

“The Queen is a maid, and the King is an ageless cultural relic...”

My working hours were only in the mornings, so I had free time in the afternoons, and if we were to just discuss the working conditions, there could be no better. But the threat of being exposed at any time was about to give me stomach ulcers...

The reason for the stroll, therefore, was to familiarize myself with

the escape routes in case I had to run for it.

Spring had almost come to an end, and the beginnings of summer had started to reveal itself in the lush greenery of the woods in the courtyard, where bright sunlight pierced through the canopy of leaves.

“Isn’t this palace a little too large?”

Ten minutes into the stroll, I let out a shout of dismay. Just the building proper would have occupied a huge area, and there was an immensely well-maintained and beautiful garden out front, followed by a forest in the outer circle!

The Queen had said that she nearly got in deep trouble while picking mushrooms out here and getting lost. She even warned me with a completely serious face that I had to be careful of the ground underfoot because there might be swamps and pools of water below. At that time, I had thought “Was the Queen just directionally-challenged?” Or maybe just prone to getting lost? But now when I actually entered this forest, I realised that I might even be lost in its depth myself!

There were several layers of walls outside of the forest, and a moat filled with water outside of them.

Until 10 years ago, the isolation faction and its counter were still fighting perpetually, so this castle was fortified into a fortress, so its current appearance was probably a left-over effect of that time.

But, as it was, there was no way for me to escape.

Muah, forget it. It should be easier to get out than to come in, so I should first map out my routes of escape.

As I quietly muttered while planning, a lonely sound flowed from within the forest.

Violin?

The sad notes took root in my heart, commanding me to draw closer towards the direction of their source.

I had zilch talents with music, and the only instrument I could use was the tambourine.

But since I had grown up in the city known as the Capital of Music, Vienna, where you could hear music in just about anywhere, I had had the opportunity to listen to, and be moved to tears by all kinds of music, from the road-side basking violins to concerts of famed musicians.

If we were to talk just about music appreciation, I was pretty confident in my abilities.

Therefore I could declare that the handler of that violin possessed extraordinary talents.

This silver colour that shined with nobility and charm like jewels.

Despite that, felt so delicate, so sad, and so lonely.

Who was the one that was producing this music?

In rich green forest filled with straight boughs, stood a young girl with a violin in her hands.

Princess Seira!

I was speechless with surprise.

It was like a scene out of the fables.

Amongst the thin boles of the surrounding trees, an even slimmer and more delicate beauty was playing the violin.

A small hand held the glistening dark brown of beautiful instrument, a white cheek tilted to the side as support, pulling and drawing the bow of the violin. The long silver hair seemed to be absorbing the bright sunlight directly from above, and gave off a cold

sparkle in its soft waver.

Princess Seira closed her eyes in deep concentration while pulling on the violin.

The sad transparent melody vibrated in the air.

Silver hair dreamily swayed.

These sounds... such notes... to think that they were produced at the hands of this juvenile Princess!

The melody stopped then.

Princess Seira lifted her head towards me.

As our eyes met, my heart almost leapt out in fear.

“Ohohoh, my apologies for disrupting your practice! You played the violin really well... Urh, no, I mean...”

“...”

At least give me a response!

Princess Seira continued to keep her face close to the violin, looking at me coldly without even moving a hair on her brows. I was obviously scared stiff in apprehension.

~~ Why does Teacher cross-dress?

The doubts that she had earlier this morning seemed to be about to pop out from her portrait-like beautiful lips at any moment, and I could hardly stop myself from sweating in fear.

“Uh, that, about what you asked yesterday, I am not really cross-dressing as a woman... Ooh! Is it because I made a mistake and said ‘your servant’? That is just a habit, since I have always wanted to be a boy when I was young. Even now I still accidentally say that, so... even if your humble servant says ‘your servant’, it doesn’t mean that I

am a male... Ah! I said it again!"

Obviously I was just digging myself deeper, and totally felt like dying already.

Princess Seria's pair of amethyst eyes continued to observe me in silence.

Peach-pink coloured lips gradually opened...

"Heheh! So that's where you are! Ms Glinda!"

The pot-bellied uncle appeared with pomp while leading a troop of officials behind him.

The edgy atmosphere vanished without a trace in an instant.

What was with this uncle? What's going on?

Uhoh, this old uncle who kept glaring at me previously in the welcoming ceremony had caused me much discomfort, but he seemed extraordinarily polite today.

"We have been trying to locate you for a long time now, in order to seek the wisdom of the all-powerful genius Ms Glinda."

He said in a flattering voice.

"I am the Chief Minister Gaston. Ara, to have a girl-genius such as Ms Glinda visit Eren makes us all feel so privileged and thankful! Heard that Lady Glinda is an unrivalled genius who will not be stumbled by anything in the world!"

"I-I am not really that smart..."

That's right, the smart one was Glinda, while I was just a NEET who failed college-preparatory exams.

"Hahaha, that's too humble of you. With the great wisdom of a genius like Ms Glinda, all our troubles will soon disappear. Alright

then, please come with us.”

“Oh, w-wait ...”

That uncle tugged my hand tightly while the top officials of Eren surrounded me all over as if to examine a divine bird out of a legend, looking at me worshipfully. Their expressions said, “Genius Ms Glinda would definitely have a way.”

Oh no!

Where were they taking me to? What were they planning to do to me?

I was different from Glinda! I was no genius! Just a poor commoner suffering from some deficiency in testosterone that made my skin smoother than the usual! And a resident from the Kingdom of a Million Heartbreaks that could not write a love letter to save his skin!

Princess Seira nonchalantly stared at my gaping and closing mouth while I was dragged away by Chief Minister Gaston.

Ahhhhhhhhhh! God help me ~~~!

“That, I still have to prepare for tomorrow’s lessons...”

“Ms Glinda is a genius, what do those things matter.”

“No, no, no such thing, I am just an ordinary person...”

“Hahaha, Ms Glinda sure knows how to joke around.”

Please let go of my hand! Fat uncle! The grease was about to make me puke!

Teary-eyed, I was brought to some research facility inside some corner of the palace.

The air was thick with a murderous aura in this research facility,

with occasional grunts of anger sounding.

“E-everyone seems so busy here, I guess I shouldn’t be disturbing...”

But when that bunch of people noticed my presence...

“Ms Glinda!”

“Why it’s the person herself!”

Everyone rushed over gleefully towards me.

Ooooohhhhh! Even if I were to be greeted by such a huge crowd of men, I would not be pleased. In fact, my face was turning red.

An architect called Satchel reverently said to the petrified me “Lady Glinda must definitely offer us her wisdom”, then spread out an immense blueprint.

“The Ionie River outside of the city often overflows, and we are preparing to build a dyke around it.”

He continued to pour out a flood of technical terms for well over twenty minutes, before asking me: “Well, what do you think?” while everyone looked on with eyes full of hopeful expectations.

T-those eyes were obviously awaiting me to provide some ingenious pointers!

I felt cold all over.

If it was Glinda, she would just elegantly resolve the problem, winning glamour and praises from everyone all over. But I was just an ordinary boy! How could I possibly know anything about aqua-engineering, or bridge-building and such? My level of skill was just sufficient to build some bird’s house or fix the fence around our home, and even this blueprint was giving me a headache just from looking at it.

Minister Gaston glared at me, sneering.

“Oh? What’s wrong, Ms Glinda? Your face doesn’t look too good, Could-It-Be, the widely-acclaimed invincible scholar, the so-called gem of wisdom from the Winstoria Empire – Girl-genius Lady Glinda, could not even solve a problem of this level?”

This guy was definitely one of those fellows who abused their wives!

Uwwwuuuuuu... Oh no, my eyes were blurring over. This time they would definitely discover that I was an imposter, and I would soon be dragged off as a cross-dressing criminal of the state to be imprisoned or executed...

“Uww... T-that, this place here... maybe should be ‘slightly’... “

Imagining the noose around my neck, I randomly pointed at the blueprint.

Satchel frowned.

“I am sorry? Would you mind elaborating a little?”

“Uh... Ah...”

If there was anyway to elaborate, would I still be sweating like this? Please read the mood a little, Satchel~~

It was just then –

“Huh? That is!”

Satchel suddenly glued his face atop of the blueprints, carefully examining it.

“Huhuhu... So that’s what it is...”

The surrounding crowd also began to let out “Huhu” or gasps of “Ah”.

Then, everyone began whispering with Satchel in the centre, and then suddenly all looked towards me with looks teeming in respect.

“You have our utmost gratitude, Lady Glinda. But for your help in pointing out this severe issue, we would still be lost. To be capable of going straight at the heart of the problem, as expected of the acclaimed genius!”

“Wha!”

Satchel grasped my hand tightly, the surrounding people heaping words like “Truly genius”, “To be able to see the answer right away”, “Lady Glinda saved our lives” or “Lady Glinda is truly our lives’ saviour”.

“Urg... Humph, such small problems are of course trivial to geniuses.”

Only Minister Gaston had a sour face as he threw out those words.

Even though I still had no idea what was going on, it seemed like it had been resolved.

But...

“We’ve heard that Ms Glinda is also well-versed in the study of economics. Please grant us your wisdom.”

Minister Gaston dragged me somewhere else.

“W-wait...”

My knowledge of economics was just limited to weekly discounts offered by shopping malls in the Winstoria Empire...

In a beat, we had arrived at the Finance Ministry headquarters.

“Hoho! It’s Lady Glinda!”

“We have been awaiting your arrival! Regarding this problem in

our accounts, we wish to discuss something with you.”

The crowd brought over a stack of numbers-covered documents that seemed thick enough to serve as a murder weapon. I was dazzled by the sight alone. The end. This was surely the end of me. I trembled as I pretended to peruse the books...

“Ah, this...”

I muttered with a frozen gaze.

“Hoho, any comments?”

The surrounding financial department officials peered over from my two sides.

Everyone focused their lines of sight suspiciously on the page I was looking at, and suddenly exclaimed: ”Eureka! All that we had to do is to bring the remaining sums from this side to the other side for manipulation!”, ”Hoho, then there will be not need to raise the taxes! As expected of Lady Glinda!”

Despite not understanding what ‘this side’ and ‘that side’ meant, I dully nodded to accept their praises.

Again Lord Gaston grunted in displeasure.

“Humph~~~ There’s something else!”

Lord Gaston dragged me away while gnashing his teeth.

No matter where I got dragged over to, however, all that I managed to do was to take a glance and mutter something unintelligible, before everyone else said in reverence.

“So that is it! It is just like that!”

“As expected of the ingenious Lady Glinda!”

There was even this bent rheumatic old secretary with sore back

who skipped lightly while holding my hand.

“My backache disappeared! It’s a miracle!”

“Do you see that? Even just one small touch is sufficient to cure! As expected of Ms Glinda!”

“It’s like the legends coming alive!”

Were the people of Eren Kingdom always this gullible...

Was it really so easy to succeed? Was the title of being a genius really so potent?

No, there had got to be some trick awaiting me...

I sensed an air of killing intent. Glancing over, I saw Chief Minister scowling furiously at me like an unfed baited gorilla.

“T-that... It is about time for me to go for my marathon practice...”

The disquiet in my heart warned me to run away as quickly as possible, but a claw-like hand stopped me.

Lord Gaston showed a little smile to my cowering body.

“I have heard that Lady Glinda is capable of defeating 10000 men alone. If that’s really the case, your skills in martial arts must be exemplary.”

My challenger was a young man named Jerome who shouldered a humongous broad sword.

He was a blue-eyed blond pretty-boy with exquisite five features who held the commanding seat of the knight company. With only one of his arm, he could swing a large sword that was almost as high as my body.

“Ha, you’re asking someone as handsome and strong as me to fight with a girl in lacy dress? Spare me please; if it gets out that I hit girls,

my reputation's gonna get tarnished.”

“You must give no quarter! Jerome! The opponent is a genius, so you must give your all! Spare no effort to beat her down! If you lose, I am going to deduct your wages!”

Chief Minister Gaston shouted.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. Jeez. Uncle, why do you always force me into such pointless stuff?”

The pretty-boy knight sulked.

On the training grounds of the castle, crowds of knights and soldiers waited to watch our duel.

“Hey, who do you think will win?”

“Most likely it’s gonna be Jerome. Even though he likes to boast around, his skill is top notch. No matter how wise the genius is, she’s no match for a man’s muscle strength.”

“No, but since it’s Lady Glinda, maybe she can actually win.”

“Today’s definitely going to be an exciting match. I must go boast to those dudes who aren’t on duty!”

Ohohoho, such heavy expectations... huge pressure...

I was just a scrawny boy! I had never lifted anything heavier than a spade, and was a pacifist who even released the fishes I fished up!

Besides, this... this huge sword... the edge seemed to be gleaming brightly... was it actually real?

“Hey, who would bring this lady a set of armour?”

The pretty-boy knight yelled towards the watching crowd.

Was this duel so deadly as to require the need of armour?

“There’s no need.”

A calm voice sounded on the training grounds.

Huah! It was Princess Seira! Why was she here?

The eldest Princess Seira was just 9 years of age, but emitted a stern air of impenetrability all over. She coldly commanded.

“Teacher Glinda does not require any armour.”

Huh? What did that mean? Was she setting me up?

Alarm filled all who were present.

“Oh, since Lady Glinda is a genius, she has no need for armour?”

“As expected of Lady Glinda!”

Wait a second! It was not I who said anything! It was obviously Princess Seira who...

“Ha! Interesting! Alright, then let’s begin! I shall teach you, that women should not tread lightly into the battles of men, and just follow obediently!”

A vein seemed to have popped on the head of the handsome knight as he screamed, probably mistaking my refusal (not mine exactly, it was Princess Seira) of armour as a challenge to his ego.

Wah! Help! If Glinda was here, she would definitely have a way of defusing this crisis, such as by hypnotising the opponent into believing himself as a pigeon; or, having completely researched into the weaknesses of the opponent even before the battle began, just whisper a word that completely shatter the opponent’s morale as soon as the battle began.

But, I could not possibly do any of those things!

“You have best surrender! Ms Genius! Or you may really get hurt!”

The knight pompously flicked his golden hair and pointed his huge sword towards me, its edges gleaming in a dangerous light.

Uwwaaaaah! If that thing was to slice at me, even my bones would be sliced apart!

Heeeeelp~~~~ Muuuurrrdeeerr!!!

I could care less about impressions at this stage! Only by pleading surrender and ending this farce of a duel would a commoner like I be able to survive!

The sword was about to fall.

I kneeled forward with my sword.

“I-I surren...”

“What!”

The handsome knight gave a shocked scream.

Strange? I looked up just to see him trip and barrel-rolled violently.

The gigantic sword was swung into the sky before dropping and stabbing into the ground beside me.

Much further away, the head-over-heels knight fell keeled over.

The crowds around us fell as silent as a cemetery.

Princess Seira watched on coldly.

A minute later, cheers resounded throughout the training grounds.

“Absolute genius! To be able to avoid Jerome’s attack just at the right instant, and even throw him aside by borrowing his momentum!”

“I had thought that she would use her sword, but to win just by her

hand-to-hand skills alone! Just how calculated is her application of skills?”

“That calm and easy manner with which she won is unbelievable! This is the mark of a genius!”

I had just wanted kneel down and surrender, but that seemed to have made handsome-knight Jerome miss his target and fall over by himself.

The pretty-boy knight crawled over in pain, moaning.

“Uwwuu~~~ For me to lose to a woman! Why can’t I read any of your moves! How the hell did those thin arms manage to throw me aside? Is that witchcraft?!?”

You just fell by yourself...

“Fool! I have told you not to be careless! I will deduct your pay! And demote you!”

Lord Gaston shouted.

“That, I really should be returning to my room... See, even the sun is setting...”

The sunset washed over the buildings in a red glow and crows cawed mournfully in the sky.

Chief Minister Gaston’s face became so swollen that steam almost escaped from it, muttering, and then said while glaring.

“Even this is not enough to proof that Ms Glinda is a talent suitable for our country! The real test lies in next month’s marathon competition!”

What marathon competition?

That night, Anneth visited me after her shift ended and cleared my doubts.

“There is a marathon competition next month organized personally by His Majesty, and it has been divided into two competitive groups, one for men and the other for women and children. The top runner of this competition would be awarded a luxurious gift. All members of the royal family will be participating in it.”

“Huh, huh? The King, the Queen and even all the Princes and Princesses would be participating?”

What was the big deal that even the royal family would be taking part?

But Anneth replied without any surprise.

“That is right. You see, this idea actually came from Her Majesty. The Queen actually loved marathons, and won the 2nd prize in a competition when she was in elementary school. This is so memorable for Her that His Majesty, who dotes on the Queen so much, decided to organize a marathon competition open to the public.”

Wow, were all affairs of royalty so easily decided? It reminded me of Sultan Harihasan who outlawed causing any injury to cats because of his favourite cat-loving concubine. This ruler who ruled over a desert country a thousand years ago even built monuments and palaces everywhere for the sake of his favourite concubine. I guessed he must have been the neighbour of King Cecello in the Kingdom of Wife-Lovers.

“Any foreigners who wish to participate in it must first pass an initial round and be judged fit. The ministers felt that this could cause excessive burden on the issue of security, and so requested that only the people within the capital be allowed to take part. But His Majesty overrode them, saying that only a non-discriminatory competition would have any meaning in it.”

“Hoho, so that’s how it comes to be.”

I nodded.

“Besides, this will serve to show other countries that Eren is safe and peaceful, as well as increase the common-folk’s trust in the royal family.”

So it was not held only for the sake of the Queen. King Cecello’s legendary wisdom was no mere rumour.

As I pondered over such things...

“Glinda really notices things that commoners like us can never even imagine! So cool!”

Anneth looked at me with eyes filled with respect.

Then she smiled adorably towards me, causing me much embarrassment.

Nah, I was just an armchair political commentator who enjoyed picking at the reports of newspaper and the tabloids for their shallow analysis. This much was truly nothing... Haha...

Anneth was really cute... I wish I could go on a date with her. We could go on a picnic in the fields... while I cross-dressed?

While I lamented, Anneth exclaimed with stars in her eyes:

“But, to prepare for this marathon run, they must begin repairing the roads and paths even in the face of insufficient manpower. Oh, the hardship it causes would become the trigger for deeper camaraderie between men of all rank and files!”

Huh? Somehow the topic became a little distant...

“Situations such as when the gorgeous senior passes out from pure fatigue! The normally stern and guarded senior collapses on the shoulder of his underling! The long-enduring underling is also fabulous~~~ Of course, the senior is the Bottom, while the junior is the Top!”

Here it comes! Top and Bottom again!

“Satchel, that architect in charge of aqua-engineering, and his immediate subordinate Luka give off a hot atmosphere. Luka seems to enjoy touching Satchel, and Satchel doesn’t seem to mind either, even secretly passing his manual to him. Ooooohhhh! My nose bleeds just from the thought of it! Fred and Guy from the Labour Department also look suspicious! Lyon and Alec from the Finance even share their clothes! Those two must definitely be in a relationship!”

“That... Is that so...”

“Definitely! A 100 percent!”

Anneth shot me a thumbs-up while winking to assure me. The topic had totally gone on a cruise...

“Hu... I thought we were talking about the marathon run competition...”

“Ah, that’s right. That’s why I say that marathons are the best! Gleaming muscles and flying sweat drops are matchless combinations! The painfully panting Bottom and the Top who embraces him at the finishing line! Marvellous!”

My head was starting to spin from the ache... She was so adorable... Why...

“That is why I would be watching romantic competition of the men’s group, but I would also cheer for you, so you must fight!”

“Huh?”

“Aren’t you also participating in the competitions? Chief Minister Gaston has already announced to everyone, he said that ‘Because Lady Glinda is a genius, she would be taking part in the men’s group. She can definitely defeat the weak men of Eren Kingdom and win the top prize.’”

“!”

“What’s wrong, Glinda? Your face doesn’t look too good.”

“... I want to go run 100 rounds around the castle right now...”

“There’s definitely no problem for you! That’s because you are a genius! You even easily defeated Jerome of the Knights Brigade. Jerome may look handsome, but is actually a narcissistic and irritating fool, so everyone is elated. Glinda is awesome! You would definitely finish first in the race!”

At the sight of Anneth’s sparkling eyes while saying such things, I could hardly say that I was no good at running.

Another person who was equally frustrated with the marathon race was none other than its instigator – Her Majesty, the Queen.

“What to do, Teacher? In an entire year, there is only a single half-day when I actually enjoy a marathon race, and that is during its closing ceremony. For the rest of the 364.5 days, I hate it and would even pray fervently at the ‘teru teru bozu’ dolls every day before the race that there would be rain on the day of the competition.

When I was in the 4th year of elementary school, I was the second place for the girl’s competition in my class of 12, and that was only because the ten in front of me all got lost. But Mother felt that I would most likely never again win any prizes involving exercises, so she baked a cake to celebrate it with me. You should understand now that I run as fast as a tortoise? Boohoo, what should I do? Everyone knows that I would be participating in the marathon run, so there’s no way I can shirk from it now. All I said was that I can still remember the pain of running the marathons... I never said that I wanted to run...”

Her eyes began to glaze over with tears as if throwing accusation at the King.

Muah, if that was really the case, She should have made clear Her

thoughts to His Majesty earlier. Then King Cecello who so adored His wife would never have organized a race to torture His most beloved.

In the end, the King was telling everyone all over:

“The one who suggested the marathon race is Her Majesty, everyone should participate. That way, the Queen would be overjoyed.”

As it was, there was no way for the Queen now to shun the race. And that went for me as well.

“Ms Glinda is a genius, so she will win easily! If she lost, she will have to do a head-stand while wearing a skirt!”

Chief Minister Gaston was announcing such to everyone.

Sir Jerome who had been sent flying by me (?) also said.

“I will never lose this marathon competition! If I win, I will make her put on this pair of dog ears while barking, ‘Arf! Woof!’. Of course, I would do the same if I were to lose!”

He twirled a headband decorated with dog’s ears in his finger as he announced it.

If I were to say that I did not want to participate in the marathon race now, nobody would accent to it.

Not only that, I was apparently listed among the prospective top winners already.

“The top prize would definitely go to Ms Glinda! That’s because she’s a genius!”

“I would also cheer for Ms Glinda!”

Hearing that bunch of people who arbitrarily decided to form my cheer-leading team, I could feel my ulcer reacting.

Besides that, another group within the army said:

“Even if she is a genius, it is an utter disgrace to lose to a girl! We must steal all three top places, and all who do not make the top 100 places will have their pay deducted!”

They began to train every morning in high spirit.

Even people from the clerical departments staked their honour and said:

“We must not be looked down upon by the soldiers!”

According to the news, the atmosphere outside of the palace was even more intense.

“The winner would be awarded a great prize!”

“We can see the royal family!”

It was a complete festive mood.

From the successfully completed roadwork, tightening of security, and furore of improved moods, it could be said that His Majesty’s decision to organize a marathon competition had already borne fruits.

But, the colour of my complexion paled with each closing day, as did the pain in my stomach worsened.

“Uwuuuwuu... Teacher Glinda, we must keep fighting...”

The Queen gripped my two hands with her eyes clouded over in tears, but the only thing I could do was to help Her Majesty with her manufacture of ‘teru teru bozu’ dolls.

It was at this time that, Helmut, who had departed for nearly half a month, returned to Eren Kingdom.

“What’s this? What a funny-looking accessory.”

Helmut looked at the window hung full with ‘teru teru bozu’ and asked in apprehension.

In the hometown of Her Majesty, apparently people believed that by crafting a doll from a piece of white cloth wrapped around some cotton, then drawing on it the eyes and the mouth, they could summon forth sun-shine by hanging those dolls upright, and call forth rain by hanging them upside-down.

“Let’s pray that it would summon a great flood like that in the legendary Genesis.”

I mumbled in despair and Helmut seemed to have caught on. He displayed that unbelievably cheerful smile of his.

“Countries everywhere are all abuzz with news of Lady Glinda’s registry for the King’s marathon run competition, even saying that if she cannot win the 1st prize, she would put on a dog-ears headband and do headstands while wearing a skirt and barking: ‘Woof! Arf!’”

“The tabloids have done it now! Uwwuuuwuu... I promised no such things; it is Chief Minister Gaston who went all by himself to spread all those rumours. That old uncle has been glaring and marking me since day 1, and even now looks for all kinds of means to bully me.”

“Hoho, that’s because Gaston belongs to the Orlando faction.”

Helmut nodded.

“Orlando?”

The Orlando Kingdom was my father’s hometown, and was also known as the Kingdom of Chivalry that prided itself in its martial prowess. When our parents passed away from an accident, Glinda and I continued to stay on in Orlando until we were 5 years old.

“Despite its small size, Eren Kingdom has temperate environmental conditions and still much undeveloped lands and resources. Until 10 years ago, this country is still known as the ‘isolated kingdom’, but

after opening up to the outside world, it has vigorously absorbed culture and technology from outside and been developing non-stop.

It is within expectations that the Eren Kingdom would become even more prosperous, more affluent, and more powerful in the future. Therefore, every country has been fighting to create diplomatic ties with Eren under terms that are most beneficial to themselves. And for that purpose, every country offered up the best things in their possession as gifts to seal those pacts. The Kingdom of Chivalry Orlando offered strength of might, while the Economic Superpower Rubinia offered money and labour.”

In the midst of all these offers, King Cecello chose the Empire of Knowledge and Arts which offered the promise of sending over the omnipotent-genius Glinda as the royal tutor – the Winstoria Empire.

“The King of Eren Kingdom made a very wise decision. Orlando’s military aid and Rubinia’s wealth are both very tempting offers, but that would also chain down the kingdom into relying on them. Our Imperial Highness could see through this point, and just offered Winstoria Empire’s gem: girl-genius Glinda. It spoke of His wisdom.”

“Chief Minister Gaston wanted to forge the alliance with Orlando Kingdom?”

“That’s right. That’s why he sees you as a thorn in his side.”

No wonder, then, that he kept bullying me, looking as if he wanted to chase me away! The intricacies of politics had reached the point of domestic uproar! My shoulders sunk in complete enervation.

“... If I could not achieve top in this race, would I have to do headstands wearing a skirt?”

“That won’t do, if you display any unladylike character, it would disgrace the reputation of the Winstoria Empire. His Imperial Highness would also be displeased, and it may jeopardise the relationship of our two countries. You must never do that.”

Helmut said as-a-matter-of-factly.

“Then, how am I supposed to win in this contest?”

“If it had been Glinda, she would never have allowed things to proceed on to this current situation. Sigh, Sher-chan is so useless.”

My temper shot up by a mile. How dare you take this attitude towards me when you were the one who abandoned me to my fate for well-nigh half a month! What did you imagine I felt when I strung on the corset every morning! Even though my skills with the brow-trimmer and walking while in a long-dress had greatly improved, I could feel no pride!

“Then hurry and bring the real Glinda over! Isn’t the Intelligence Agency of Winstoria Empire the best in the world?”

“Our Intel Agency is truly the best in the world. Despite sending out our best agents on the trails of Glinda, we could find no trace of her, but obtained information about a young girl who single-handedly ended the tribal feud in the Oter Desert to the south, and news of a mysterious scientist who discovered a new strain of potatoes in the Etonia Kingdom to the north, as well as a few other similar intelligence.”

“Apparently they are all so highly skilled! So why haven’t they caught her yet? Just give them all the sack!”

“That’s because Glinda is just that good. As expected of our country’s national treasure.”

“Stop trivialising me! And stop smiling like that when you say it!”

“Ara, it has just been half a month of not seeing you, Sher-chan, how did you manage to become so spiteful? When we first met, you were just shivering like a little rabbit, not even capable of proper speech. Just look how you’ve grown.”

Just the sound of him imitating the warm speech of a senior was

enough to make me faint. This fellow was totally unmoved.

“... How about you run this race for me then.”

“That won’t do. The entry of Ms Glinda has already become the focus of this competition.”

“But, my stamina at running has always been at rock-bottom. And if I were to do headstands while wearing a skirt, Winstoria Empire’s reputation would be damaged. As a man, I am not too offended by people seeing my underwear, but I certainly don’t want anyone to see me in a lady’s undies.”

I insisted in a huff, and even Helmut gave a serious sigh.

“It can’t be helped. Although this would be breaking the rules a little...”

Helmut placed some stuff on the table.

“These are tripod spikes laced with anaesthetics. These are some very potent laxatives. The test-tube contains many live wasps. In addition, this here is a voodoo doll, which despite its frivolous appearance, is apparently quite effective. It was said that when the renowned idol-queen Emily broke her legs in an accident and lost her crown to the runner-up newcomer Hilda, she claimed that Hilda had placed a hex on her with this doll.”

“I have no wish to hear such dangerous topics about women.”

“Is that so? Then just use these things to settle the issue.”

“Tripod spikes and laxatives are hardly <breaking the rules a little>! It is totally disregarding the rules! How is it that you carry around such diabolical things around?”

“Being a diplomat is in fact a demanding job that put your life in constant danger. Ara, It is about time for me to get to work. Sherchan, for the sake of the alliance between the Winstoria Empire and

Eren Kingom, you must definitely win this race.”

“That’s impossible!”

“Oh, and there’s still these pads. I’m sure those from before are insufficient, right? I have specially ordered for you some of those that are softer, more comfy, and less prone to slipping off. Also, here are some model answers to the Imperial College examinations that Glinda scored full marks for when she was just 7. Sher-chan should work hard too, so as not to expose yourself.”

Saying this, Helmut left after handing me a dozen of pads and a thick book of model exam answers.

After his departure, Anneth came in immediately and bombarded me like a battery of cannonfire: “Hey, tell me please, how long would Lord Helmut be staying? Did he say anything about His Majesty being so handsome and lovely that he wants to push him down and do those kinds of things?”

My mood sunk even deeper.

Be it Mr Voodoo Doll, or Ms ‘teru teru bozu’, please just deliver me from this marathon run.

Even as I continued to be trapped in my helplessness, it was now the day before the marathon run.

I hugged the thick book of model answers close while continued to practice barking like a dog as I went for a little afternoon stroll in the courtyard. Just then, I bumped into Prince Ryuuju who was training in short sleeves and shorts.

Prince Ryuuju was nothing like his twin sisters Princesses Sarasa and Orie who complained, “What marathon run competition? How unbelievably tiresome!” Instead, he trained diligently every morning and afternoon for long periods.

For all his tough talks, he was also a diligent worker. Muah, what

an excellent child.

In comparison, I should really reflect on myself.

Just then, he noticed me.

“!”

He instantly widened his eyes, frowned and stiffened his face.

To this day he was still keeping me at arm's length, thinking probably that I was a female vixen who peeped on his bath and even pushed him over.

“Training for the marathon? Your Highness Prince Ryuujyu is so hard-working.”

I said in the tone of a kind big sister archetype, but he just tightened his lips, backed away slowly, and then shouted with a blushing face.

“I... I have not been looking at your chest! And don't care about women who peep on baths like you!”

He fled after throwing those words out.

He probably was still mindful of his little sisters' teasing words, but seeing his obvious display of hostility still hurt my feelings.
UWuuWuu...

I walked towards a fountain in the courtyard and collapse-sat on its edge while stretching out my legs.

“... Don't mind it.”

Came a sudden voice. I closed my legs in a panic.

Looking upwards, a pair of amethyst transparent eyes had been staring directly at me.

“P-princess Seira!”

Kya! Here it comes again! Why was this Princess always appearing from nowhere, coldly staring at me?

Was she threatening me with “I know your secret”? But, it seemed that she had not yet told anyone else that I was a man. What really was her purpose? So puzzling.

Then again, why was I getting so worked up over a 9 year old kid...

“... Elder Brother Ryuuju may sometimes say some inappropriate words when he is shy. That is not his true intentions.”

Huh? Was she consoling me?

But, both her words and expression were as monotonous as usual.

“Eh... Princess Seira, don’t you detest me?”

Princess Seira had an expression of shock when she heard those words.

“Because, when I was duelling with Jerome, you said there was no need for me to have armour...”

I could still remember it because I was still somewhat bitter about it.

But, Princess Seira calmly replied.

“... That’s because armour is too heavy, and I think that Teacher won’t be able to move well in it.”

“Huh?”

So she had not been setting me up, but was actually helping me.

“Is that so! Sorry! I had been mistaken about Your Highness, Princess Seira...”

I stood in a rush, and the thick book of exam solutions fell from my

laps in my hurry. Princess Seira picked it up.

“Winstoria Imperial College’s ... past entry exam papers?”

“Wha! That’s not really mine! Why would a genius like me need to refer to something like that!”

“... This answer is wrong.”

“Huh?”

“Is there a pen anywhere?”

“Oh? Uh... here.”

I handed her the pen that I always carried around. She took it and breezily began to solve the problems.

She completed them one after another with the proficiency of an expert, almost as if she knew the answers like the back of her hands.

What was she? Was I just seeing things? Was this child some sage from somewhere? Oh right, now that I thought about it, she also completed my exam in a couple of minutes the other day...

“P-princess Seira!”

I was just about to think that I might actually be able to get along with her, but seeing this monstrous ability shocked me so much that I took hold of her slim shoulders.

Princess Seira looked up in surprise and silver hair brushed against the back of my hand.

“I have been wanting to tell you this... That, maybe you have thought I am a cross-dressing pervert, but that is not the case at all! If I do not cross-dress, there may be great trouble between the Winstoria Empire and Eren Kingdom! So, I mean, please, don’t tell others that I am not Glinda!”

I said while bowing my head.

After a moment of silence, a calm voice said.

“... Teacher is saying that, it is not that Ms Glinda is actually a man, but rather Teacher is not even Ms Glinda in the first place?”

Noooooooooooo! I had dug myself deeper again!

I dumbly looked up with a gaping mouth, but there began an eerie silence.

Princess Seira stared at me with an empty gaze that I had never seen before.

So hollow and devoid of emotions that a chill raised through my spine, it was almost like being bewitched.

“... So, you could not ‘see that’?”

“W-what do you mean?”

Could not see what?

Princess Seira ignored my question and displayed an expression of disappointment, then returned to her western-doll like poker-face.

“... If you are ‘not Ms Glinda’, tomorrow in the race, you have best not get too close to Elder Brother Ryuuju.”

She flatly said, as if prophesising or maybe it was a warning.

A chilling sensation ran over the top of my back.

Princess Seira elegantly retreated. My hands, which had been on her slim shoulders, held only thin air.

“Hey! What is that supposed to mean?”

She ignored my shout, and left on her own. I was dumbfounded as

I stood rooted to the ground.

Returning to my own room, I checked through the model answers book that Princess Seira worked on. She had gotten every questions correct.

Chapter 06

Day of the marathon run competition.

I had manufactured 3 dozens of ‘teru teru bozu’ but apparently that was not enough. The sky was dark and overcast as if it was about to downpour while hot wind blew about the place; it was an undeterminable state of weather.

The starting point of the race was situated at the entrance of the capital which was filled with participating runners and on-looking cheerers on both sides of the track. Guards putting up barrier ropes fought to keep the onlookers from trespassing into the runway.

“Sigh, how repulsive! We are Princesses! Princesses should just rest comfortably in a pure-white room, reading romance novels besides vases of roses! That has been the rule for more than 3000 years! Humph!”

“That’s right! So right! We are so delicate and fragile, we may even fall sick!”

Those pair of twin Princesses Sarasa and Orie were both clad in cutely embroidered skirt and baggy pants while stomping in displeasure. The guards around hastily tried to appease them. I secretly thought that, with their energy and hyper-activeness, even running 4 rounds should be nothing for them.

A far cry from Her energetic daughters was the Queen, who stood pale-faced and looking as if she would collapse even before the run had begun. She kept rubbing at her chest and breathing deeply.

Was Her Majesty really alright? Fortunately, there were many guards around her, so should anything really happen, they would definitely take good care of Her.

There were also guards around Prince Ryuujy who was actively

swinging his arms and stretching his legs in preparation, looking all normal. I turned towards Princess Seira, who was also surrounded by guards, her expression as usual.

What did those words that she said yesterday mean?

She said that if I was not Glinda, it was best that I did not get close to Prince Ryuujy today... It was like the foretelling of a witch, how scary.

No, there was no time to think about such things.

A big bucket of drink was placed before the finishing point and a mountain of bananas piled high beside it for participants to help themselves to.

Within the pockets of my waistcoat I had been carrying the tripod spikes laced with anaesthesia, the highly potent laxative, test-tube of live wasps as well as the voodoo doll.

The only thing I could do now is to use this... I took out the packet of laxative from my breast-pocket.

If I just spiked the bucket of drink and bananas, the participants would all have running stomachs and be unable to continue the race.

In the end, I still brought over all the illegal stuff that Helmut passed me! Waaaah! I couldn't just do that~~~

But, if I did not get the top prize, the relationship between Winstoria Empire and Eren Kingdom might become adversely affected...

In my anxiety, I peeled open a banana and sprinkled a little of the powder on it.

The white powder vanished on the banana without a trace.

Uh... That way it would probably not be detectable. Oh, but it

would definitely be suspicious to peel open an entire pile of bananas, so I guess spiking the bucket of drink would be better... Ahhhh! What was I turning into?!?

Let's just give up; there's no joy in winning with such methods. I was a model citizen, not that venomous Count Ascano of Rubinia who loved getting rid of his enemies with poison. As an extra, the Count seemed to have died from choking on an oyster; a fitting death indeed.

I was just about to destroy the spiked banana...

"Hey! Glinda!"

Jerome from the Knight Company appeared all of a sudden, clad in an eye-catching red cape.

"I would pay you back today for the humiliation you gave me on the training grounds! Have you forgotten our promise? If you lose, you would put on a pair of dog's ears and bark 'Arf! Woof! My Master!' Ha!"

"I-I don't remember making any such promise (That's just your own sick interests! You pervert!)... Ah!"

Jerome snatched the banana from my hand.

"You cocky little lass that get all conceited from just a few words of flattery! Watch me as I swallow you whole like this banana! The main actor today would me! Buahahaha!"

Jerome took the banana and strode away with his cape flying suavely behind him.

Was he really going to run with that cape wrapped around him like that... Wait, he just ate the banana! That's the banana with laxatives on it!

Helmut said that the laxative was so potent that its effect would

immediately show...

As I imagined what was going on within Jerome's stomach, cold sweat began to rise from within.

"P-pretend not to know anything..."

I muttered while shifting my eyes away from the red cape moving away into the distance.

In the end, I ran out of options and the marathon run began without any incidents.

A projectile-less cannon fired into the air, signalling the beginning of the race, and the male competition group began to run.

I was initially positioned among the frontline at the starting point, but was immediately overrun by the flood of people from the rear, fighting to even remain upright.

Pretty-boy Sir Jerome was initially positioned far behind me in the rear lines, but with a strange scream "Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah! Stomach! My stomach!!!" he pushed aside the other runners and shot out wildly. Looked like the laxatives had taken effect.

"Ms Glinda, I would be going first then."

King Cecello greeted me briskly as he overtook me.

"It's His Majesty!"

"Long live His Majesty!"

The surrounding crowd cheered.

"His Majesty is so handsome! So charming!"

There were also such fan-girl squeals around.

The King gave everyone a smile, attracting copious amounts of 'Ah'

and ‘Wow’ among the crowds.

To the people of Eren, King Cecello was an existence on the level of a god. Pretty much hidden in behind the thick walls of the royal palace at all times, the appearance of the legendary King of beauty running before their very eyes caused some of the commoners among the watchers to grasp their own hands in thanksgiving.

This race would certainly greatly raise the support for King Cecello and radically deify the descriptions of his beautiful outer appearance among the tabloids.

Me, on the other hand...

“Hey, why is there a girl among the men’s group?”

“Heard that Winstoria Empire’s Ms Glinda would also be in the men’s group, but this girl’s probably someone else.”

“Hoho, oh yes, it is said that Ms Glinda is a divine beauty who runs as fast as a deer.”

“There’s no way that geniuses would run this slow. That girl looks cute, but doesn’t seem to create even a bit of impression and looks so ordinary.”

“Yes yes, Ms Glinda must have departed with a speed far beyond what our commoners’ eyes can detect.”

“Hoho, that may actually be possible for a genius.”

“Ms Glinda is so incredible!”

“Would we be able to see Ms Glinda during the award ceremony?”

“Definitely as beautiful as they say she is.”

“Yeah, I mean, even His Majesty is more beautiful than the legend says.”

“But, if that girl isn’t Ms Glinda, who is she?”

“Probably just some confused girl who barged in on the men’s group.”

“What, is that so, hahaha, Hang in there, Ms Confused Girl!”

Uwuuuwuu... the idle chatter surrounding me broke my heart.

All this while, I continued to fall behind.

Even though I should at least try and recover some distance, I just could not gather my strength.

Everyone who passed me by displayed a shocked expression that seemed to say “Why is Ms Glinda here?” and then outran me further.

The roads and buildings outside the city were all new and in good conditions, just as the pathways had been cleaned to within the standard of developed civilizations. Every corner was also guarded by a soldier.

But, I soon lost the interest in appreciating the scenery around.

I was panting hard and dizzy. My heart was beating as if it could burst out of my chest.

Just how much further is the finishing line?

The track apparently extended from the city to the suburbs, going through the hills and returning back to the city and stopping before the castle.

I panted with all my strength, finally running out of the city and coming to a quiet plantation where even the breeze was cooler.

Fuu... Fuu... Midpoint at last...

I breathlessly bounced along a narrow path cutting though the plantation.

There was nobody else around nearby. Did that mean I was the last?

The soldiers standing guard watched my slow bumbling steps and were shocked.

“Ms Glinda is the last?!?”

“Could geniuses be last?”

What, geniuses’ couldn’t possibly be last? ~~~ Outrageous!

Even if I were to use the anaesthetic-laced tripods Helmut passed to me, there was nobody else behind me to step on them.

Not only that, by the time I reached the snaking bends in the track, even the cheerers and guarding soldiers had disappeared.

Sigh, if only I could get attacked by a bear in the hills, so that I won’t have to run any longer.

That’s right! What the flying hippo was I running for? I was sweaty, dizzy and weary, but all for what? Would my running bring about world peace? Would it save all of humanity? Would it decrease tax? Would it make Helmut uglier? Would I be able to grow at least some facial hair?

While I bemoaned my situation, a clatter of steps closed in from nearby.

What? It seemed that there was still someone behind me.

But the footsteps seemed to be extraordinarily quick in succession.

A breeze blew past in a ‘Wosh!’.

A black-haired boy with tightened lips and stiffened face ran past my side.

Prince Ryuuju?

That's to say, the women and children's group had started the run, and I was even beaten by Prince Ryuuju who was at its head?

Noooooooo! To lose to even children!

I was supposed to be a man!... A man!

Recalling Helmut's smiling face saying "This is a shame to the Winstoria Empire", I truly just wanted to run into some disaster in the hills.

His Highness did not even turn to look at me, but ran around the bend in the forest path in a breath.

There should have been bodyguards beside him, but he had probably outrun them all.

Hey! What's the meaning of that? How could they just leave the Prince alone unprotected? These irresponsible slowcoach tax thieves!

I ignored my own current situation while criticised others.

At that moment...

Masked men came out on both sides of the Prince.

These men did not seem to be friendly common folks no matter how you looked at it. Could they be disguised guards? But no, the dangerous air about them was chilling.

Those men covered Prince Ryuuju's mouth and carried his small body into the thick woods.

Ruffles in plantation and struggles of the Prince vanished into the forest without a trace.

Huuuuuuuuuuuuuh?!?

Kidnapping?

I turned but could see no trace of the bodyguards.

Wwwwwwwwhat should I do?

Should I run backwards for help?

But by the time I returned those people would have been gone for long.

Gritting my teeth in the face of danger, I ran after Prince Ryuuju.

“Prince Ryuuju! Prince Ryuuju! Heeeeelp~~~ Prince Ryuuju has been kidnapped~~~”

I screamed with all my strength while running through the forest.

Boooohooo, please hear my cries, bodyguards who were on their way! There was no way I could handle the kidnappers alone! Absolutely never!

As I fervently prayed, someone grabbed my mouth and dragged me from the rear.

“Uuuuu!”

I was captured and immobilized. Before me was Prince Ryuuju who had been caught in the same situation by the group of masked men.

My body was frozen in fear.

Waaaaah! Kidnappers~~~ I’d been caught!~~~

Prince Ryuuju had his mouth gagged and one arm restrained, but continued to struggle. He winced in angry surprise when he saw me, as if to say “why are you here?”. What choice did I have?

Noooooooo! What would happen now?

As if to answer this question, the masked men started to discuss

among themselves.

“What should we do with this girl?”

“It would be trouble if she caused a ruckus. Take her with us?”

“No, that’s too troublesome, just rid of her.”

W-wait! What were you saying!

As I almost dirtied my undies from fear, the man holding onto Prince Ryuuju suddenly screamed.

“Ouch!”

His Highness had bitten the man’s hand.

The one restraining me was also stunned and loosened his grip somewhat, or maybe because he had thought me a woman, was careless.

I elbowed him in the guts with all my strength.

“Uuuoo!”

The man completely released me.

Now!

I had begun to rush forward, reaching within my breast pocket for the test-tube of wasps, opening it before the man in front.

The wasps flew forth from the opening of the test-tube, buzzing all over.

“Huah! What are these!”

Prince Ryuuju also stomped on the feet of the man restraining him and escaped his grip.

“Hey! Wait!”

The men chased in a hurry, but I threw out the packet of laxative powder.

The powder dispersed into a cloud of dust and we ran while the men fell into a coughing fit.

“Prince Ryuuju! Please run before me! Your legs are more nimble, please go run for help!”

“B-but!”

“Quick! Or we would both be caught!”

I sternly cried to the apprehensive Prince Ryuuju, then turned and threw the tripods towards the pursuers.

“Whoa! What is it this time!?!?”

The tripods struck the face and hands of the men, but maybe due to the cloth wrapped around their face and gloves, the anaesthetic laced on the spikes was not effective.

“This b****! How dare you use such toys against us!”

Oh no! That seemed to have infuriated them!

A man unsheathed his sword and sliced at me from above.

I immediately took out the voodoo doll to block it, but the doll was just sliced into half in one blow.

“Kyaaaaa!”



A shameless scream escaped my mouth.

The slice just now had sliced through my clothes in front from my shoulder to just above my chest.

The cut on chest area was particularly deep. But for the thick layers of pads, I feared I had already suffered a mortal blow. When considering that, I felt cold even from the tips of my toes.

“Glinda!”

“Don’t come here!”

I had already told you to escape, so why were you running back!

You were a prince! How could you not first look to your own safety!

“I’m alright! Please run!”

As if I could be alright! ... I was being driven to death’s door by this group of men...

The sword sliced again.

If I were to die here, people would probably discover that I was male when they buried me, then everyone would probably say that Ms Glinda was a cross-dressing pervert...

As I thought about such things with unnatural calm...

“Whoa!”

An arrow shot from nowhere and pierced the hand of the man about to slice me through.

Soldiers who had been invisible thus far somehow surrounded us without our notice.

Sword-wielding bodyguards were also standing at guard in front of

Prince Ryuuju.

“Ms Glinda! Are you alright?”

“Uuuoh... I-i guess...”

The soldiers beat back the kidnappers in an instant, and captured them.

Could this be the effect of the voodoo doll? I glanced at the beheaded voodoo doll with a complicated expression.

M-maybe I should go get exorcised afterwards... L-Let's get up first.

“Our utmost apologies for arriving this late, Your Highness!”

“Am I the only one being attacked? Is Lord Father alright? How about Queen Mother? And my little sisters?”

Prince Ryuuju asked in worry.

“Please ease your worries. Their Majesties and Highnesses are all safe. Apparently this group here have been targeting Your Highness right from the beginning. But even though we have already caught wind of it, we still let Your Highness fall into danger. It is completely our responsibility.”

Prince Ryuuju finally relaxed his shoulders.

“That... Lord Father and the others are alright...”

He mumbled in relief – then, jumped in hindsight.

“Right! I have not reached the finishing line yet! I must continue the run!”

Having just encountered such a fearsome experience, he was ready to immediately return to the competition.

What a strong willpower, even I was collapsed on the ground, my

legs so weakened that I could hardly stand.

But, maybe it was due to his twisting his ankle in the escape, Prince Ryuuju suddenly scrunched up his face and grabbed at his own foot.

“Your Highness is in no state to continue the run.”

The bodyguards tried to persuade him.

“No! Members of the royalty should be examples for the common-folks! If I were to give up half-way there is no way I would be fit to represent the country! Everyone would also worry about having such a weak future ruler!”

Prince Ryuuju stood up, determined to continue the race.

But he twisted his expression immediately.

Even so, he gritted his teeth, and sweating profusely, dragged his feet onwards.

Sigh, so frustrating, what a stubborn child.

The soldiers looked at each other helplessly.

If the duty of royalty was to reach the goal no matter how difficult it was, and to smile waving at the common citizen no matter how painful it was, a spineless guy like me could probably never be a king ever.

If he did not have any support right now, he might not even be able to stand up.

Even if I was just a weak commoner and a lazy bum whose only forte was to flip newspaper or history stories while criticising famous people, there was no way I could just sit at the side while watching someone else hard at work.

How troublesome.

I walked towards Prince Ryuuju, barring his way.

His Highness glared at me.

“Glinda... You can’t stop me, let me pass.”

“Don’t look down on a little foot injury. What if you can no longer walk for the rest of your life?”

“H-how could that be...”

“Could you say that it will never happen?”

Maybe due to my fierce tone, Prince Ryuuju could not utter any word.

Perhaps due to just having escaped from a near-death situation, my words were free of fear or apprehension, be it in the face of kings or princes.

“Earlier Your Highness ignored my warning and came back. If the soldiers had not shown up on time, you might even have been sold to foreign countries before you can succeed the throne, or even died! So you have to obey me this time!”

Prince Ryuuju widened his eyes as I grabbed his hands and pulled them around my neck.

“W-what the... are you doing, Glinda.”

“I will piggy-back you and run.”

“What did you say!”

I gave a little ‘Heeve-Hoo’ and supported his small bum.

“Hey! Let me go! Glinda! This is so embarrassing! To be piggy-backed to the finishing line by a woman is so shameful! I would rather bite my tongue and die!”

I scolded loudly at the struggling Prince Ryuuju.

“As the heir-to-the-throne, how can you say you would give up your life so easily!”

His Highness gave a little jump on my back, and even the surrounding bodyguards nearby stopped.

“Stop throwing tantrums, you little kid who has no idea of the dangers in this big wide world! A really great man would fight to live on no matter how great the pain or the shame! That’s called responsibility to the people! Besides, even the king does not rule the country alone! As a king you must know how to use the help of other people! Nobody ever said that kings are omnipotent! So stop trying to do every single thing on your own!”

Prince Ryuuju stopped struggling.

He slowly gripped my neck, hugging my back so that I could feel the body warmth of the little child.

“Good! You just sit tight like an heir-to-the-throne and ride on my back at leisure!”

I began to run.

After saying such audacious lines of words, I couldn’t possibly run slower than a tortoise now, could I?

Thankfully, in my adrenaline rush, I had forgotten the tiredness.

I galloped madly like a race horse.

Maybe we had been delayed so much by the kidnapping incident, there were few runners left in sight.

Panting deeply, I strode right on the centre of the running track.

“Huh? Glinda! What are you doing?”

Among the race-watching crowds, a voice that sounded like Anneth called.

The other watchers looked too in our direction and exclaimed.

“Isn’t that His Highness, Prince Ryuuju?”

“That’s right! It’s His Highness who has been running at the front just earlier! What happened?”

“Who is that girl giving him a piggy-back? What marvellous strength!”

“Whoa! Those eyes are blazing! Even her nostrils are fuming! Even if she is obviously just a girl, her hair is unkempt, clothes torn, and flames seem to be bursting forth from her rear!”

“It’s Ms Glinda! That omnipotent genius!”

“What did you say? That’s Ms Glinda?”

“No wonder she looks so different from normal! Those eyes are just like she’s been possessed!”

“I heard from someone that Prince Ryuuju had been attacked by bandits in the middle of the race just now!”

“No way! I heard it was kidnappers, not bandits!”

“Huh? Huh? What’s going on?”

“I heard that Ms Glinda suddenly showed up in the nick of time and defeated a large band of sword-wielding kidnappers bare-handed!”

“Terrific! As expected of a genius!”

Everyone began to clap vigorously to cheer.

I focused on prancing towards the finishing line.

Where was it? Where was the finishing line?

My legs and heart could no longer take it. Due to the tear in my clothes, the situation on my chest was deplorable. The voodoo doll peeked its head out, and several layers of pads had fallen down onto my waist.

Sigh! Were we there yet?

“Glinda!”

“Big Bro Ryuuju!”

The frames of twin princesses stood in the front.

The pair of them each gripped an end of a rose-coloured ribbon, probably tied together from the ribbons on their own hair.

They waved vigorously towards us.

“Just a little longer! Glinda! Big Bro Ryuuju!”

“Fight!”

At the side of Princess Sarasa was the blissful looking Queen. So too was the gently-smiling King, with the toddler Princess Suzuna. Young Prince Shin and even the mature-eyed Princess Seira awaited us at the ending point.

The rose-coloured ribbon touched my hips and flew into the air.

Princess Seira widened her eyes, quietly watching.

Thunderous applause and cheering filled the air as the crowds wildly called the names of Glinda and Prince Ryuuju.

The royal family surrounded me who had just run past the finishing line.

“Ohhhhh! Teacher Glinda, thank you so much for rescuing

Ryuuju! Ryuuju, I am so glad that you are alright!”

Her Majesty hugged His Highness tightly with tears in Her eyes.

“Sorry, Queen Mother, for causing You so much worry.”

Prince Ryuuju also fell into his Mother’s chest.

“Lady Glinda, you have rescued the heir-to-the-throne, and is a benefactor to the Kingdom of Eren.”

King Cecello’s line drove the crowd frantic with excitement.

“Lady Glinda has known all along that His Highness would be kidnapped, so slowed down on purpose!”

“As expected of the omnipotent Genius!”

“Lady Glinda is the true winner of the marathon race!”

“That’s right! Only Lady Glinda has the right to the gold cup top prize!”

Someone carried over the glittering gold cup prize, but I became embarrassed and humbly said.

“No way, that’s too unfair to the top runner. Right, who happened to be the top runner?”

As I looked from side to side, a breeze blew past.

And tragedy fell that instant.

I had kept running while piggy-backing someone even though my clothes had been sliced open, and now this wind was all it took to open up the torn clothes like a double-door!

As if that was not enough, the entire set of clothes fell off from shoulders downwards.

Cha...

A falling sound, and the things covering the upper-half of my body as well as the voodoo doll fell at my feet. Before the staring eyes of the present crowd, my half-naked body stood frozen.

I stood mystified, still not realising what had just happened.

Huh? Feels... Strange? What was this cooling sensation?...

Everyone stared at me in shock with expressions screaming “Unbelievable! How could it be so!”

The courtyard was deadly silent, and after a glance downwards, I let out a “KYAAAAAAAAAAAAA” piercing scream, hugging my bare upper body with both arms.

Wwwwwwwwwwwwhat should I do? I'd been seen... completely uncovered~~~~~

And it had to be before so many people! Ahhhhhhhh!
Uuuuuuuu.... I was finished, my male identity exposed. Gone, I would soon be dragged off and executed!

I felt dizzy and my entire face; cheeks, temple and even neck blew, up in a fiery colour.

It was this instant that a cool quiet voice broke the silence.

“Teacher, your important breast pads had fallen off.”

Princess Seira picked up the pad that had fallen on the ground and handed it to me calmly.

“The other pads had probably fallen off while you were protecting Elder Brother Ryuujyu. There should be at least 5 pieces of them.”

The monotonous voice steadily continued.

“Urg... T-that...”

The surrounding crowd blew up in commotion.

“5 layers of breast pads! So that is the reason! Ms Glinda is a completely flat chested lady who needs a huge pile of padding!”

“It is true that the size is ridiculously small. At that level, she really needs 5 pairs.”

“Muah, it’s almost as flat as a man’s.”

“Ohoohooohoo! So that’s what a super washing board looks like!”

“I see, so 5 pairs of breast pads, huh. Ahahahaha.”

T-these fellows! How dared they to laugh so loudly after seeing another’s chest!

Princesses Sarasa and Orie also said with tears in their eyes.

“Poor Glinda.”

“To be this flat even after puberty.”

Her Majesty quickly took off her own overcoat and covered my body in it, consoling.

“Ara, ara, don’t take it to heart, Glinda. Nowadays, many men also prefer them flatter.”

Even His Majesty vigorously added.

“Even if Ms Glinda does not have full-rounded breasts, she possesses an intelligent head.”

But, the corners of His lips seemed to be twitching as if to keep from laughing.

Afterwards, due to His Highness Prince Ryuujу fainting from a rush of blood from his bleeding nose, a huge commotion ensued...

As the situation settled down, I accepted the gold cup award from the hands of King Cecello under the warm claps and cheers of everyone.

Everyone snickered at me who was hugging the huge trophy.

“I see, so that’s a washing board.”

“So that’s a runway.”

“Hoo! I can totally see it clearly! Really completely flat!”

“So even geniuses have weaknesses!”

Hearing such whispered gossips, I could only lower my flushed head.

For the record, the first one who reached the finishing line was Sir Jerome of the knight company, who had beaten everyone else by a far margin.

All while screaming “It’s coming ouuuuuut~~~”, he ran out of sight and vanished without a trace even until the closing ceremony. He was disqualified as relinquishing the top place, and it was granted to me due to the special occasion.

“Humph! Damned flat-chested girl!”

Chief Minister Gaston angrily murmured... how scary.

Hoho, at least nobody had discovered that I was male.

The day after, tabloids all over the world flashed the headlines: “Genius Ms Glinda an astonishing flat-chest!”, “Ms Glinda’s chest was in fact two little red peas!”.

Being able to rub some blemish upon Glinda’s utterly perfect record, I was actually a little pleased with myself. But once I considered the possibility of Glinda knowing about my being stripped half-naked in full view of crowds right in the centre of the capital,

causing her to be reported as little chick-peas, I flinch to imagine her fury.

Besides that, even though the masterminds behind the kidnapping incident had been caught, there was still something that continued to bug me.

To verify my doubts, one afternoon after lessons were over, I went to seek an audience with His Majesty, King Cecello.

Epilogue: Glinda Dolye's deductions

“You said that you have something you would like to discuss with me in private, so what is it about, Ms Glinda?”

After dismissing the people around, the beautiful king shined me a sparklingly lovely smile and asked.

The mere sight of it was enough to drive my weak heart racing non-stop, but I must clarify this no matter what happened, so I looked straight into the eyes of His Majesty.

“Your Majesty, were You the one who was responsible for the kidnapping incident of His Highness Prince Ryuuju?”

I actually said it!

Even though my heart was beating like a drum from the nerves, I had burned my bridges.

King Cecello gently narrowed his eyes.

“Oh?”

He murmured.

“Why would you think so?”

King Cecello stared straight into me, enquiring gently, but I could feel an immense sense of pressure from it, and the tense air almost

impaled my skin.

“Eren Kingdom discarded her policy of isolation not more than a decade ago, and the capital is apparently at peace right now, but I have heard that outside of it, there remained some pockets of resistance supporting the previous king belonging to the faction of isolation. It is still too dangerous for royalty to casually participate in a marathon race open to public at this time, and in fact, many top officials are of the same opinion.

But from another point of view, this is also a good opportunity to investigate suspicious people from outside the capital, tear down old buildings, repair the roads and bridges, and demonstrate to the citizens as well as foreign countries that the Eren Kingdom is both peaceful and culturally advanced – Your Majesty’s wisdom obviously saw through all that?”

While I ran outside of the capital, I could see that the roads and buildings all around were new and in excellent conditions, and the commoners were also joyfully cheering for the racers.

“Through this race, the citizens would definitely improve their opinion of the royal family. But among them, there would definitely be people who do not feel that way and may even pose a danger. These are all things that Your Majesty would have already foreseen.”

Of course, if investigations were made in the name of public security for the sake of the race, a portion of suspicious elements would definitely be uncovered, for example, the remnants of the isolation faction who opposed King Cecello’s policy.

What would happen if they were to be forced into a corner? What actions would they take?

“To steal into the palace and attempt to kidnap or assassinate royalty is an extremely difficult task, but in a marathon race open to public, the chance of success would definitely be much higher.

Who would they have their sights on?

Laying hands on the legendary and experienced king would definitely be hard, so the target has to be weaker than His Majesty, but also a prominent member of the royal family... that is the representative of the policy of opening up the country, Her Majesty who is Herself a foreigner, and the heir-apparent His Highness Prince Ryuuju.

These two are the obvious targets.”

His Majesty’s lips maintained its smile.

His beautiful face of national treasure fame betrayed no hint of any shadow, looking serenely at me.

~~If you are not Ms Glinda, in tomorrow’s race, don’t get close to Elder Brother Ryuuju.

Princess Seira had told me indifferently before.

Did that child realise the truth even beforehand?

I added strongly.

“Your Majesty knew right from the start, and so arranged for a wall of armed guards to surround Her Majesty, even the Princesses were heavily guarded.

But, the one who ought to be protected the most, His Highness Prince Ryuuju, was all alone.

There is no way that adults cannot catch up to a child, and this is almost an obvious ploy to tempt the enemies into kidnapping him at the abandoned paths... And also, the appearance of the rescuers was too coincidental, I deduce that Your Majesty have ordered them to observe from afar right from the beginning.”

King Cecello said as if nothing had happened.

“As expected, there’s no way I can escape the sharp eyes of Ms

Glinda.”

His tone held even a trace of elation.

I angrily yelled.

“Stop joking around! How could you have used your own son as bait!”

At this moment, I could care less about the opposite being the king of an allied country.

This was not something that a father should be doing with his child, not to mention that there was hardly a trace of regret in him.

At this, King Cecello’s expression altered.

The original gentle smile tightened, and His eyes let out a piercing light.

“I have no intention of letting Ryuuju become a useless king.”

His manner of speech suddenly turned very serious.

“I wish that Ryuuju will sooner turn into a good king that can succeed me and not one that can only rely on the protection of others. I want him to be capable of thinking for himself, choosing and acting, to become a real king that has the power to protect others, and for this, he must be allowed to encounter all kinds of experiences. Merely staying sheltered in the nursery is not going to develop any strong heart in him.”

“But, His Highness Prince Ryuuju is merely eleven! What if something unexpected is to ...”

“Nothing unexpected will happen.”

King Cecello displayed a proud and confident look and asserted.

He did not holler, nor had he waved his sword around.

Just one short sentence was sufficient to send trembles up my spine and render me speechless.

“A kingdom must not lose its heir or I too will be troubled. Besides I love my children very much, but most importantly, if Ryuuju were to run into some problems, the Queen would definitely become saddened, and I will absolutely not do anything that may cause Her to cry. So, <Nothing> unexpected will happen.”

An incomparable confidence.

Unshakable willpower.

Nothing like the behaviour of a typical father of this world.

His Laws; only the things that He believed could be the truth.

My hands were covered in cold sweat.

Even though His words were illogical, I had no means of rebutting.

What was there to rebut against someone with completely different sense of morals and values? King Cecello might be of the same species as Glinda.

“That’s right, Ms Glinda, someone as intelligent as you should also understand, that these words should not get out of this place, and especially not enter the ears of Her Majesty. If you were to tell Her...”

Cold eyes stared into me, and I was completely frozen over by it.

The King Cecello now might be known as a god-like Hero, the Blue Sky-Drake King, but when he was still the previous king’s younger brother from different mothers and living in exile in an isolated dilapidated castle far from the capital, he had another name...

That’s right, I had read of it in an edition of the “Private stories of World’s Royalty”.

While he was still a prince, due to his icy-cold beauty, and cruel,

unpredictable nature, everyone had called him the “Sky Blue Demon” in fear...

“!”

Wwwwwwwwhat should I do? How could I have tried to challenge this kind of man?

I was suddenly paralysed in fear.

“Ho. What is it, Ms Glinda?”

King Cecello walked over with an elegant smile.

T-this smile was sooo scaaarrry!

“Taking this opportunity, Ms Glinda, would you mind teaching me as well?”

Uwwwwwaaahhhh~~~~~

Just as the King’s face closed in and my heart began screaming in fear...

“Is Teacher Glinda here?”

A clear voice came in, and Princess Seira appeared.

The Princess slowly approached towards me, and looking towards her Father, said “Lord Father, I would like to discuss with Teacher Glinda a mathematical thesis of Professor Muden from the Winstoria Empire, may I borrow Teacher for a while?”

Her words were calm, but were also longer than usual.

King Cecello gave a surprised smile.

“Ho? It looks as if Seira likes Ms Glinda a lot.”

“That’s right. Teacher Glinda has taught me many helpful things.”

“Is that so. Then, Ms Glinda, please go accompany Seira.”

“W-w-w-w-with pleasure!”

Princess Seira slowly walked back towards the entrance, while I hastily followed.

“Fuuee... saved!”

Past the corridors and coming into the courtyard, I could finally let out a breath.

“Oh, that, regarding that professor something’s thesis, I am really sorry, but I had no...”

“... I know.”

Princess Seira said in a flat voice.

“Huh?”

I was struck by surprise.

“Did you pull me out on purpose?”

Did she just rescue me from the scene earlier?

Her Highness was silent.

When she entered the room, I was unable to hear any sound of the door opening, so maybe she had been eavesdropping on King Cecello and I from behind the door all along.

She had warned me too, not to get too close to Prince Ryuuju on the day of the race.

When my clothes fell apart, the one who helped me pick up the pads and distract the topic was also her.

“That, you said earlier that if I am “not Glinda”, I should avoid

getting to close to Prince Ryuuj, what was that supposed to mean?"

"... Because you seemed to have no means of responding to emergencies then, but I seemed to have underestimated you, sorry."

Her voice was as emotionless as usual.

"Uh, no, there's no reason for your Highness to apologise. I should be the one thanking you instead. But for your aid in picking up my pads, everyone may have already discovered that I am male. But, about His Majesty's plans, did you also..."

I was about to say "did you also know about them?", when cold little hand stretched out and covered my mouth like white snow falling onto my lips, giving a soft sensation.

The 9 year old girl's small fingers were soft and her face which was looking at me was small and delicate with smooth glistening pallor. Beneath her long lashes, a pair of translucent amethyst eyes appraised me quietly.

Cherry-coloured lips gently parted.

"...If you value your life, say no further. Lord Father may love His wife and care for his children, but <King Cecello> is cold and ruthless man."

These words that sounded nothing like a child's frightened me. Ohoh, she had really been coming to my rescue earlier.

Even during the race earlier, or when I was facing off Sir Jerome...

My heartbeat sped up, and said hopefully.

"I understand, I won't say anything... Would... Would you also help me keep my secret?"

Princess Seira should probably say 'Yes' right?

Despite her cold emotionless appearance, she was actually pretty

friendly.

But...

“I might consider it...”

She said nonchalantly.

Uh... Wha?

The pair of purple crystal eyes silently looked at me who was frozen by surprise.

“You <cannot see it>, you are <not Glinda Dolye, so you are <useless>.”

The words that came forth from those delicate lips sent chills down my back.

“But...”

A trace of conflict floated in her cold eyes.

“Even though you <could not see> it, you still rescued Elder Brother Ryuujyu, and even interrogated Lord Father. Nobody has ever done those things before, so I would give you a chance.”

Give me a chance?

I held back my breath, my neck and temple covered in cold sweat as I listened to this 9 year old girl pronounced her judgement like the goddess of fate.

“If you can guess what I desire, I will not tell anyone else that Glinda is an imposter.”

第三話

愛の女神の日



Chapter 07

“What does a 9 year old girl desire?”

The morning after Princess Seira gave me a “homework assignment”, I paced in frustration along the corridors of the palace.

-- If you can guess what I desire, I will not tell anyone else that Glinda is an imposter.

Thus the Princess had demanded, but nothing came to my mind.

For a normal girl, jewel accessories and clothes would probably be sufficient, but the Princess most likely did not lack in either of those things.

Besides, she looked nothing like a normal 9 year old girl.

I thought back to the amethyst eyes that seemed to perceive through me and her cold expression. Shouldn’t 9 year old girls be more innocent?

If I could not guess what she ‘desired’, she might even coldly say.

“Then, I could only announce to everyone that you are actually a cross-dressing pervert.”

Uwwwwwaaah! If she did that, I would be captured as an enemy of the state and be dragged off to be executed.

While I was worried about such, His Highness Prince Ryuuju walked towards me.

“G-Glinda!”

“Has your foot recuperated?”

I forced a smile in a hurry, and His Highness blushed profusely when he looked at me.

“Y-y-yeeeessssss!”

“You must have obediently listened to the advice of the doctors to rest well?”

“I-I did not rest because you told me to! Since I am the Prince, I have the duty to recover quickly so as not to make everyone worry!”

“That’s right. You have grown mature.”

“!”

Prince Ryuuju widened his eyes.

Then he shyly shifted his line of sight, saying.

“T-that... Do you know what day next Monday is?”

“Next Monday? Hoho, that has to be Lana’s Day, right?”

On my reply, the Prince’s face turned a deeper shade of red.

“Right, that’s the day dedicated to the goddess of love Lana. I-I heard that in the Winstoria Empire, couples would compose and play music dedicated to each other, but in the Eren Kingdom, males would propose to females they like by giving them precious stones.”

“Oh? Is that so? The custom of exchanging gifts seems to be different in each country. How interesting.”

“Tha.... That’s right.”

His Highness’ eyesight kept darting around.

“Oh, right. Speaking of gifts...”

“What!”

“It’s nothing, really. I just wanted to ask, do you happen to know what Her Highness Princess Seira desire?”

Prince Ryuujу had an obviously displeased expression on his face, tightening his lips and stiffening his cheeks.

“Why would you want to know what Seira wants?”

He asked unhappily.

“Huh?... That’s because, I have been indebted to her often these few days, so I wanted to give her something as thanks.”

“When has Seria taken care of you?”

He puffed up his checks and became more suspicious.

“That... For example, during the race...”

His Highness’ face turned red again. Why did this boy blush so easily?

Ah well, I could understand his issues; the proud Prince being piggy-backed by a ‘woman’.

“I-i-i-i-is that so? The race, huh... I did cause you much embarrassment that day ...”

“Please don’t mind that, and forget about it already!”

I said in a hurry. If we kept up this topic, even I would feel embarrassed.

“Those things aside, about what Princess Seira desires...”

“Uh... She seemed to enjoy reading ancient books about legends of heroes.”

“Legends of Heroes?”

How quaint. She did not look like the type who would love such romantic fictions.

I continued to ask:

“From the point of an elder brother, what would Your Highness think about Princess Seira as a person?”

“You sure are mindful of Seira. I have no idea when the two of you got so close.”

He glared at me again.

“No! That’s the complete opposite in fact! Because when compared with Princesses Sarasa and Orie, Princess Seira almost never talks with me at all, so I am just looking for an opportunity to...”

I struggled to find an excuse.

“Is that so. Wow, you sure take your job seriously. From my point of view, Seira is a commendable little sister. She is both intelligent and calm, but more importantly possesses the character members of royalty should have. I really wish that Sarasa and Orie would take a page off Seira.”

Any ordinary folk that had a younger sister as outstanding as Seira would probably have felt inferior and ashamed, but not His Highness Prince Ryuuju, who cheerfully discussed his little sister’s good points. That was his strength, with his upright, simple and strong-willed character.

I smiled appreciatively.

“What? What’s so funny? D-don’t misunderstand! I just came here to make some small-talk, not because I have any interest in you! My nose only bled too because you ran too fast, making my blood pressure raise... and absolutely not because of your b-b-b-b-b-b-breaaasss...”

I also turned red in embarrassment.

“Sorry, sorry, please don’t bring that up...”

“S-sorry! I just carelessly...”

Prince Ryuujу covered his nostrils and backed away.

“Anyway! I have absolutely no interest in you. I have no interest in Lana’s day either!”

He ran off after saying such.

Why mention Lana’s day then?

I confusedly watched his retreating footsteps.

The twins Princesses Sarasa and Ories were also excitedly discussing Lana’s day.

“I heard that couples who swear to spend their lives together on Lana’s day would be happily married forever!”

“How many couples would be born in the capital again this year?”

The two of them were discussing topics too mature for their ages.

“Justin of the Finance department seemed to be secretly in love with lady officer Selina, and Selina doesn’t seem to mind it much either.”

“Claude of the Domestic Affairs is deeply in love with widow Cathia, but he probably has got many rivals, right?”

“Aren’t Count Badis, Sir Erin, and Secretary Julian all in love with Cathia?”

“The love affair between Milther the stable-hand and Rita the maid is also frustrating~~”

“I know right! Milther is so shy that he definitely can’t pluck up the courage to confess to Rita. Bystanders at the side are fuming with impatience already!”

“Lana’s Day’s obviously a good day to confess.”

The girls seemed to enjoy gossiping about other people’s romantic escapades... though a man like me just found that to be busybody.

“That... About what Princess Seira would like...”

I jumped in at the gap in the conversation, carefully asking.

“I want an accessory with a ruby in it! Its edge must also be decorated with pink stones like the patterns of flowers!”

Princess Sarasa happily said like a spoiled girl to her boyfriend.

“I want an emerald hair accessory! The stone has to be as big as pigeon egg too!”

Princess Orie’s eyes also shined with desire.

“I was not asking about the two of you, but about Princess Seria...”

“Huh~~~~Big Sis Seira has everything already. She’s so intelligent, has already read every single ancient book in the library, and she also looks as beautiful as Lord Father.”

“That’s right~ I really want to have silver hair like Big Sister Seira’s! Blond is everywhere in Eren.”

“I will dye my hair silver when I grow up!”

“Me too! And purple amethyst eyes are also lovely.”

“Yeah, if only hair and eye colours can be freely chosen.”

“Is it not said that the tribe living in the Meredith forest holds a mysterious power? Maybe they can even change the colour of their

eyes.”

“Why not just ask Glinda here to invent a drug that can change the colour of eyes, the bridge of the nose and the shape of the chin! After all, Glinda is a genius!”

“That’s good idea! Please, Glinda! This kind of drug would fetch millions!”

As usual, the topic of conversation flew off in a distance.

For Anneth who had become used to visiting me at my room after work, interest in Lana’s day took on another direction.

“Wow! What should I do? Satchel and Luke may move on to the third, or even the fourth base upon confessing to each other on Lana’s day! Lyon and Alec, those two old couple, must definitely be having a sweet romantic evening, whispering sweet nothings such as ‘My emerald eyes are the precious stones for your Lana’s day gifts’, so exciting~ Right, right, Glinda, would Lord Helmut come back to Eren on Lana’s Day? What precious stone would Lord Helmut give to His Majesty? Or would he say, ‘No precious stone can compare to the bright glitter you give off’, kyaaaa! So romantic!~”

“Uhh, I heard that in Eren, males give precious stones ‘to females’ as gifts to propose on Lana’s Day.”

“Love is beyond gender! Just the mere act of declaring love to someone you like is the noblest form of action!”

Her speech of such unyielding determination managed to convince me as well, how scary.

“Besides, even if it’s not to propose, you can also give gifts to thank other women that had been nice to you before. Since Eren Kingdom is a source of precious stones, you can easily find plenty of raw unprocessed minerals in the hills or along river beds. You can just bring those to the craftsman, and might even be able to haggle for a good price to process the stones.”

“Oh, that’s great.”

“Girls exchanging gifts among each other are common enough, so men should be able to gift other men too! No, it should be made a law!”

It felt cute for girls to exchange gifts with each other, but somewhat disgusting for men to do the same, not to mention the gifts in question were precious stones.

“Ahaha... Anneth, when you were 9 years old, what did you wished for?”

I tried asking, and she beamed back with me as she replied.

“Western dolls! The Ulysses 1st generation boyfriend dolls and 2nd generation boyfriend Eugene from Flora girl dolls series – elegant prince and wild wilful knight pairing is really too lovely!”

She was already like this since 9 years old?!?

I tried to imagine Anneth with her angelic and adorable appearance when she was young, and dared not pursue the subject.

Until now, I still had no clue about what Princess Seira ‘most desired’.

No, that must definitely be because I had been asking the wrong people.

The afternoon on the next day, I came to Her Majesty’s room.

To learn about the child, It was best to ask the mother.

“Ara, welcome, Teacher Glinda.”

The Queen welcomed me with a cheerful smile in her maid uniform.

“The blueberry pie is almost ready.”

Her Majesty personally cut the blueberry pie, and served me with hot tea.

Was it really fine to let the Queen of a country do such things? I worried over that every single time, but Her Majesty seemed to be the happiest and most satisfied while doing such housework.

Ohhhh, if only someone like Her would be my girlfriend.

Her stature was both slim and petite, looking no older than myself, but was in fact the mother of six children. How against the rules!

I found myself fantasizing about unrelated things again, and stopped immediately.

No, now was no time to be idling, but to find out more about Princess Seira!

I pretended to talk about the lessons, and steered the topic gently towards Princess Seira, saying something like “even though Her Highness is just 9, she’s so capable!”

But Her Majesty’s expression suddenly fell.

“That’s right. That child learned how to walk and talk earlier than anyone else... and even stopped needing me to nurse her after a few years. I truly wish that she would rely on me and let me spoil her more.”

The Queen seemed quite worried over the overly-serious, overly-capable Princess Seira.

“That child’s interests are very broad, having extremely high standards in clothing, food, and even home appliances. She is so similar to His Majesty in this regard, even when it comes to playing the violin...”

Violin?

I remembered the notes I listened to in the palace courtyard; a crystal clear sound that felt nothing like it came from the hands of a child.

“His Majesty used to play the violin like this in the past too, but He didn’t feel very happy back then either. The feeling when He played back then felt so lonely.”

Her Majesty lowered Her eyes.

“When Seira played the violin she seems so lonely too. Even when she is wearing clothes that she liked, owning everything around her, I still feel that, that child does not seem to have anything she really wanted.”

My heart tightened when I listened to this.

To have such a gentle Mother, was it not enough to be happy about?

“I worry much about Seira... wondering if she had seen through things <too much, too clearly>.”

--You <can’t see it>.

I could almost hear that cold voice, and jumped a little in fright.

In the eyes of Princess Seira, what kind of landscape existed? What could she perceive?

Princess Suzuna who had been sleeping in a nearby crib suddenly woke up, crying for her Mother.

Her Majesty quickly cradled her, looking intently at the baby.

“What is wrong? Mama’s here.”

Princess Suzuna heard her Queen Mother’s kiddie-talk voice, and smiled happily.

A warm smile also rose on Her Majesty's face.

It was a scene that felt sweeter than honey poured upon a pound cake.

But soon, a shadow fell on the Queen's face again.

"I really wish that children would remain this small, and keep letting me hold them in my hands like this. This is really a mother's selfish desire."

She murmured.

I did not wish to see Her Majesty looking like this, so I carelessly said.

"Erm, by my abilities alone, I may not be sufficient to teach Her Highness Princess Seira, but I still want to be a teacher that can comprehend her, and open the door to her heart. I would definitely try my best!"

Ohoh, to actually lay down a promise like that when I was just imitating the real Glinda, and was even called <useless> by Princess Seira!

But Her Majesty was so touched that tears filled Her eyes.

"To care this much for Seira, Teacher Glinda is a really caring person."

"Haha... Hahahahaha... Just leave this matter regarding Her Highness to me."

Nooooooooo, I was digging my grave even deeper.

But, I definitely could not bring myself to say that "if I could not figure out what your Princess desires, I might become an international criminal."

As I felt cold sweat beginning to form, a calm voice sounded behind

me.

“How reliable.”

King Cecello appeared with an elegant smile.

“Your Majesty.”

Seeing Her Majesty’s joyful expression, I silently clicked my tongue in discontent.

The King returned the Queen a sweet smile, then looked towards me.

Remembering the manner he forced himself on me just yesterday, my body froze involuntarily. Uwuuwuwu... Don’t be scared. Don’t be scared... uu...

His Majesty seemed to have seen through my fear, and said as if nothing happened.

“Ms Glinda, I heard you have been trying to find out more about Seira.”

Wha? He already knew?

King Cecello meaningfully half-closed his eyes.

“Since you want to know what Seira desires, let me give you a hint. Seira is very similar to me, and that is why she hates me so much.”

“Your Majesty is truly! I’ve said so many times! There’s no such thing!”

Her Majesty puffed her cheeks in protest.

“Is that so? Being hated so by my own daughter makes me feel so lonely. Won’t you comfort me? Yuki-chan?”

“Your Majesty is so spoiled all the time. But does Your Majesty

really know what Seira desires? If You really know that just say it, please stop playing around!"

"There would be no fun if I were to just say it."

"Really!"

The Queen's puffy cheeks became even puffier.

King Cecello seemed to enjoy looking at Her Majesty's expression, even pinching her checks, in what felt like an atmosphere of pink bubbles and feathers right out of some romantic comedy.

Uwuwuwu... I was still recovering from my heartache from my last breakup...

"I, I would humbly take my leave!"

I left the Queen's room with my face completely flushed.

"He totally did that on purpose, that sadistic pretty-boy King!"

This kind of man should just be paired with Helmut in Anneth's Helmu-Llo! I griped unhappily as I walked along the corridor.

King Cecello leisurely gave me a hint, but I could not understand half of it. So what if Princess Seira was very similar to Him?

Uwu~~~ That arrogant and elegant smile was so maddening~~~~~

The thing that maddened me even more was the fact that His Majesty knew what Princess Seira desired.

"If that's the case, I would definitely find out 'what Princess Seira wants the most', then go boast to both Princess Seira and King Cecello that 'Humph! That's easy!'"

Even though my motives were somewhat as such, I plucked myself up like that.

Alright, then I would no longer be holding back!

“Oh, today we would have a composition writing assignment. The topic is ‘My dream’.”

The next day, I announced this with a full smile on my face.

Even though this method was a little low, but it was certainly the most practical way.

Princess Sasara and Orie began to groan ‘what a pain’ again, but I did not let that bother me.

Princess Seira lifted her eyes to look at my icily. Then immediately lowered them and began to write.

Good, that way I would be able to know what the Princess “desired the most”.

Thirty minutes later, I called the children out to read out their writings.

First was His Highness Prince Ryuuju.

“My dream is to become a great King!”

He then elaborated in a disturbingly passionate voice about what the ideal King should be.

Next was Princess Sarasa.

“My dream is to date all the handsome men in the world, not to get married too early, maybe at around twenty two years old. Before that, I should at least have dated with at least fifty men, and from there marry the richest, handsomest, top ten intelligent, and most obedient one to my wishes.”

She read out her piece which almost made the blood-vessels on Prince Ryuuju’s head went pop.

Princess Orie was next.

“My dream was to get married together with Sarasa. Save trouble thinking that way.”

She completed (?) her speech very simply.

Prince Shin was quiet from the beginning to the end.

“...”

I eyed his assignment paper, and saw a hippopotamus drawn on it.

“... Your dream is to become a hippo?”

Prince Shin gave a troubled nod.

Muah, forget it, when I was 5, even my dream was to be scarecrow’s face.

For the record, Scarecrow’s Face was the legendary hero of the common-folk... No, now was not the time to be chatting about mundane stuff.

It was almost time for the game to begin.

“Then, the last one is Princess Seira. Please begin.”

“... Yes.”

I quietly sat down to listen as the expressionless Princess Seira monotonously read her composition writing.

“... My dream is to see <the End of the World>.”

These completely unexpected words gave me a shock.

E-e-end of the World? What was the meaning of that? ... Did she want to see the world destroyed?

“I want to meet Ophelit there.”

Ophelit... Ohoh, right, she did read books written in ancient languages and Ophelit's mathematics theorems.

The First Genius, Omnipotent Human, Man who Composed the World - - the man who was given such titles known as Ophelit was a man of the legends from two thousand years ago. Gender, age or even anything involved about him were all mysteries.

Mathematician, prophet, wizard, sage, philosopher and even musician, he conquered the world by playing <the all-conquering noblest melody> on his silver flute.

But Ophelit disappeared from the world soon after, leaving just the words “I am going to the World’s End”.

It was said the Ophelit still lived today at “The Ends of the World”.

For Princess Seira to say that she wanted to see “The Ends of the World”, did she mean that she wanted to go where Ophelit had gone to? So it was not to destroy the world.

Oh! But, the meaning of wanting to find Ophelit, was it to learn from Him?

Or was it to become someone like Ophelit?

“Ophelit was someone who had conquered the world. Is that possible in this age?”

Conquer the world?

This speech caused me to jump out of my skin again.

Hahahahaha... Conquer the world... That's impossible, how could a 9 year old little girl had such desires...

“If I conquered the world, maybe I could become Ophelit.”

Wha! She really wanted to conquer the world?

Cold sweat ran profusely, heartbeats jumped irregularly.

I had just been thinking that it was impossible when she announced that that was her intention. How scary.

Right. Glinda was also known as the 2nd Ophelit. Princess Seira “being so aware of Glinda”, was that also because of this?

A-and, King Cecello, despite his obvious ‘Citizenship in the Kingdom of Wife-lovers’ before the Queen, was in fact a dangerous usurper who overthrew the previous king who was His brother of a different mother. Since King Cecello said that Princess Seira was ‘very similar to Him’, that could mean that she was also capable of such actions, ambitions and cold calculations...

Princess Seira completed her reading.

“Elder Sister Seira really lives in a different dimension from us, or should we call it strange?”

“If it’s just me, I’d rather go visit the handsome king of fairyland, wearing lovely clothes decorated with a pile of precious stones, eating the best food and having a party every night!”

“You two are too focused on pleasure! Learn more from Seira!”

The emotionless Princess Seira was wordless to the comments of her elder brother and younger sisters.

I ended the lesson with my face twitching in shock.

For <the thing she desired> to actually be to conquer the world, so scary~~~~~



“Oh~~~ The answer to Princess Seira’s question, is it really <the World>?”

In the afternoon, I kept pacing about in my room while alone.

-- Your desire is to be the King of the World!

It was so ludicrous that I was rendered speechless.

For a 9 year old child to have such a frightening ambition, I could no longer have any confidence in teaching her any more.

If the one who said such words was Prince Ryuuju or even the twin princesses, I might still laugh it away with “what a childish desire”, but coming from Princess Seira, it felt so exceptionally serious and realistic that I could not laugh.

Oh! Ophelit conquered the world with <the all-conquering noblest melody>, right? That must be why Princess Seira was in the courtyard practicing violin in order to rehearse this <noble music>?

Or perhaps she was researching on the magic of <sound> like Ophelit... Waaaah! She might really desire to conquer the world!~~~

I could vividly imagine the picture of Princess Seria playing her violin in a black cape, while the masses knelt in submission before her. Just as goose bumps began to rise from my skin from the fear, Helmut showed up.

“Sher-chan, congratulations on winning the top prize in Eren’s marathon race! I knew you could do it. Oh, have you received my congratulatory card yet?”

Not knowing my mood, he cheerfully said.

“Highest salutations to the little red peas... Is that supposed to be congratulations? Isn’t that just humiliation?”

I tiredly said, but Helmut just continued with a look of triumph.

“How could that be? Aren’t little red peas great? Glinda, the little red peas! Pffft... heheh... I can’t imagine how she would look like when she hears about... So amusing... hehe. I even collected all the newspaper clippings.”

Helmut unfolded his collection of newspaper clippings that he brought over just to show me.

“Genius Glinda are little red peas that need to put on 5 pairs of breast pads!”, “Ms Glinda exposed at the finishing line!”, “Ms Glinda has fake boobs!”, “Genius Ms Glinda currently researching on anti-slip breast pads!” etc. Such headlines filled the collection.

How could he just laugh this happily while reading such things!

Even if he did not say it, Helmut must have been really frustrated by Glinda’s disappearance deep within.

“Oh? Your eyes look so empty. Seeing your crossed legs sitting on the bed, holding your head, and even your skin has become a little dry. Can it be that something else has occurred? This won’t do, Sherchan~”

“Stop sighing like a parent who got called to the school! And the dry skin’s because of the make-up!”

I shouted on the bed, but still discussed with him the issue with Princess Seira.

“Actually, Princess Seira has discovered that Glinda is an imposter by a male.”

“What! To be uncovered by the most problematic person... muah, but it seems like there isn’t any ruckus raised.”

“That’s because Princess Seira currently still allows this situation to continue, but I have no idea what will happen in the future.”

Learning of Princess Seira’s demands, Helmut tilted his head in

deep thought.

“What Princess Seira ‘desires’?”

“I am wondering, can it possibly be, c-conquering the world...”

I said seriously, but Helmut replied with a smile on his face.

“What a glorious ambition.”

“Hey! Are you taking me for a fool? Princess Seira actually admires Ophelit greatly, writing even in her composition writing that her dream is to be like Ophelit.”

“Ophelit is a person of the legends, there’s no proof such a person even existed.”

“I-I know that, but the Princess even practiced her violin for the sake of learning Ophelit’s sound magic... Why are you smiling wryly like this?!? And stop feeling my forehead!”

Even I myself was beginning to wonder whether I had gone crazy, uwuwu...

Helmut showed his smile of fake kindness, and began to comfort me who had begun to sulk.

“Oh well, it’s not like I cannot understand why you come to such ridiculous conclusions, since that Princess is in fact pretty extraordinary.”

“Extraordinary?”

“She is a genius like your sister.”

As if it was completely natural, Helmut continued without minding.

My heart skipped a beat.

... Similar to Glinda?

A short sentence, but it hurled out feelings deep within me.

Oh, so that was the reason.

Why had I not noticed it sooner? Princess Seira's eyes were as expressionless as Glinda's.

Even if their manners of speaking were different, nobody could figure out what either of them was thinking.

Helmut continued seriously.

"As a diplomat to Eren Kingdom forming close relationship with Eren's royal family, I have always thought that it was a very fortunate thing for both of our countries that the heir-to-the-throne was Prince Ryuuju and not Princess Seira."

I felt unhappy upon hearing such.

"You are saying the His Highness Prince Ryuuju is not as intelligent, so easier to manipulate if he becomes the king? Even though he is still a child, he is very stubborn, inflexible and sometimes takes things over-seriously, but he also has many strengths, is very hardworking and is an extremely serious student who takes notes in class."

As someone who also had a girl-genius as his sister, I could not help but spoke up for Prince Ryuuju.

"Few princes would take political affairs and governing in the future as seriously as him!"

Helmut gently smiled with slightly narrowed eyes, saying.

"Please don't misunderstand. I recognize too the strengths of Prince Ryuuju. His Highness is very charismatic with his upright nature and would be able to win the hearts of many with his outright honesty. This is a rare quality amongst royalty. Besides, he has many excellent people around him to be his support, so he would definitely become a

good king when he grows up.”

My heart grew warm as I listened to that.

As Helmut described, even though Prince Ryuuju was still somewhat awkward and immature, everyone in the capital loved him. That was because he was so hardworking and noticeable, and so adorable that people just wanted to help him out.

Prince Ryuuju might not have his father’s divine-like status, but he would definitely become a king who would be more loved by the people than his king father.

It was certainly a good thing too for the people of this country.

“Then... What if Princess Seira were to become the king?”

“I believe that a country that is ruled by a genius would not possibly be happy because the genius himself is not a happy existence. The people would never be able to understand their king, nor would the king be able to understand his people. If I were to live with someone I could never understand, I too may feel uncomfortable.”

My chest suddenly felt really heavy.

Glinda’s and Princess Seira’s eyes appeared in mind.

Blue eyes that were replicas of my own, as well as purple amethyst eyes.

Both persons’ eyes were frostily calm, and equally unfathomable.

The two girls who were far beyond my comprehension.

Obviously having everything, but wanted nothing at all...

Such a lonely feeling.

“Luckily I am no genius.”

Helmut said with mixed feelings.

“Fortunately I was just intelligent enough to graduate from the Imperial College with excellent grades, just a little suave, my family background somewhat passable, and the second outstanding one amongst my classmates. Being such an ordinary person feels great.”

“Get out of here and go find Glinda for me now!”

I screamed while pointing to the door.

“Really, and for me to take time out of my busy schedule to come see you, you are so fierce towards me every single time. Looks like I have to bring you some books on etiquette the next time I come here.”

Helmut did not forget his parting shot even as he left.

But I remained stumbled after he left.

Just what did Princess Seira desire?

What did that genius princess who worshipped Ophelit, and was very aware of Glinda who was known as the <2nd Ophelit> want?

Even after discovering the fact that Glinda and Princess Seira were both similar, I could not understand it.

To me, the person who was the hardest to understand in the whole wide world was Glinda.

I wanted to cool down my feverish head, and so decided to take a stroll around the courtyard.

I could feel the evening breeze on my face as I slowly walked.

Just as Glinda was a genius from the moment she was born, Princess Seira had been the eldest princess of this kingdom since her birth, possessing not just wealth and power, but also beauty, ability and love.

And yet, why was it that both Princess Seira and Glinda seemed so completely unconcerned about all of that?

I was feeling a heavy heart, when I heard those lonely notes in the air again.

Was the princess playing her violin again?

I closed in towards the direction of the music.

A sad and calm melody that was obviously being played by Princess Seira.

She placed the brown wooden violin against her cheek, and silently pulled the bow across the strings with her eyes closed. Those silver strands of hair flowed gently in the wind.

Seeing her as such, I could almost see, for an instant, Glinda overlapping with her appearance, and began to have trouble breathing.

Their appearances were nothing alike, but both of them had the same untouchable air, like they were warning others not to disrupt, and also the same ice cold chiselled features... causing my emotions to be completely fried.

Tear-inducing sad music flowed above the swaying tops of the forest dyed red in sunset.

Disgusting, why did I hurt so much inside? My throat felt bitter, tears threatening to pour out... Had she somehow mix some psychological disrupting magic into her music?

-- I worry much about Seira... wondering if she had seen through things <too much, too clearly>.

The Queen said so because She was worried about Her daughter being nothing like an ordinary girl.

Those pair of amethyst eyes that seemed as pure and transparent as purple crystals, just what did they see?

Conquer the world?

Become someone like Ophelit?

But Ophelit had <abandoned the world he conquered>.

Just like Glinda, he disappeared without a trace, leaving just a single sentence.

Why did Glinda disappear?

Why abandon everything?

She had never told me anything before.

Even though the one who was pulling at the violin was Princess Seira, I could only overlap Glinda's frame on her body, and felt the immense pressure of sadness and frustration on my aching heart.

It was as if a great wall had been constructed around them, impenetrable, unapproachable.

The music suddenly stopped, and Princess Seira slowly turned to look at the me behind those transparent walls with an icy expression.

I...

-- Was your wish to abandon everything?

These words seemed to come out automatically, but a portion within me hurt so much that I could not utter a sound.

Princess Seira slightly widened her eyes, maybe because she noticed my tears. I was so embarrassed that my face burnt, and I turned and fled.

Really, what was I doing!

I felt as if I was an abandoned puppy, and hid crying for a long while within my room.

Chapter 08

Even when mom and dad were still alive at the Orlando Kingdom, Glinda had stopped playing with the other kids.

“—Because they steal web content from me.”

Glinda just coldly replied, continuing to design her website that I could hardly understand anything of.

“Because they stole.”

Hearing this, I felt as if I had been abandoned by Glinda just like the other kids, and felt so pathetic.

“Am I also a thief?”

When I asked while trembling, Glinda coldly looked at me, and said.

“Yes, a thief. But you are my subscriber, so if you would visit my website, I would give you exclusive content I promised.”

Even when mom and dad were still alive at the Orlando Kingdom, Glinda had stopped playing with the other kids.

“—Because they are <different> from me.”

Glinda just coldly replied, continuing to read a thick old tome that I could hardly make heads or tails out of.

“Because different.”

Hearing this, I felt as if I had been abandoned by Glinda just like the other kids, and felt so pathetic.

“Am I also <different>?”

When I asked while trembling, Glinda coldly looked at me, and said.

“Yes, different. But you are my little brother, so if you would obediently listen to me, I would play with you.”

I was as delighted as a little puppy wagging his tail with all my might, nodding: “En!”

“Sigh..... Ahhhhhh! Now is no time to reminiscence about sad memories of childhood!”

I sat on my bed in my western dress, gripping my head and sighing.

Since the day I bumped into Princess Seira and shed tears, three days had gone by.

Due to shame and embarrassment, I could never look her completely in the face during every lesson.

Helmut who returned home the day before calmly said.

“She hasn’t threatened you; saying that she would reveal your identity immediately if you cannot find the answer, neither has she set a time limit for discovering the solution, right? If that’s the case, you can just take your time to patiently figure a way out.”

Princess Seira never did set a deadline, and since she had helped me keep my secret to this day, she might just continue to keep mum about it.

But, I had already promised the Queen :”Just leave Princess Seira’s issues to me.”; And more importantly, Princess Seira seemed to be waiting for her answer, silently applying pressure on me with her icy quiet stare at all times, and scaring me almost into spilling my guts.

“Uwuwu... If the real Glinda were to come to Eren, maybe she would have been very compatible with Princess Seira...”

No, maybe they would have begun their plot to conquer the world together already, so scary.

My mind was filled with illusions of horror, and I was so upset that I could not sit still, running out of my room.

Oh, but if I were to go out to the courtyards, I might bump into the princess again; as for Anneth, she had just said “I need to deliver something to the publishers.”, and went back home, yet to return.

So lonely.

Cold breeze swirled within my skirt.

As I slowly walked with head overcast...

“Hey! Glinda! How dare you just ignore me! Outrageous!”

A furious-looking Sir Jerome appeared in a huff.

“Huh? When have I ever ignored you?”

For someone with such flamboyant dress-sense, pompous and exaggerated attitude, how could I possibly ignore him?

But Jerome just became angrier.

“Huh? Stop playing the fool! Last night when I called at you at the new diner at the Silver Lamb Street, you just coldly stared at me! Even if there was a woman at my sides, b-but don’t you misunderstand! That was just a normal girlfriend... no, she’s my cousin... no, my elder sister!”

“I did not leave the palace at all yesterday, did you mistook someone else for me...”

“I did not mistake anyone else! The face that looked at me is truly yours!”

Jerome pointed at my face and shouted, then his own face began to

redden.

“That, maybe because of the moonlight, you looked more enchanting than normal... I have never thought you lovely before, but for some reasons, the same face in the city felt completely different, so, so I was stunned for a moment, thinking that you looked beautiful...”

I was shocked breathless.

A girl with the same face as mine, but more beautiful, there could only be one in this entire world!

Could it be that Jerome had bumped into...

At this point, Jerome’s uncle, the Chief Minister who saw me as a pain in his sides, strode over in large steps.

“I heard that you have been trying to unearth information about our country, and about our king. You must be a spy from Winstoria Empire!”

“When did that happen?”

“Stop acting as though you know nothing about it! I received reports that, this morning you were at the marketplace, not spending even a single cent and just with sophistry alone, made off with half a dozen eggs, two oranges, a string of sausages, hard bread, squid and roast scallops!”

“I must take my leave!”

I turned and ran when I heard.

“Wait! You trying to escape?!?”

“Glinda! The woman last night is truly only my sister~~~~”

I ignored the shouts that came from behind me.

This morning I had breakfast with the royal family, and then had lessons as normal.

So, there could be no way I could have appeared in the market.

There could be absolutely no doubts about it! Glinda had come to this country! And was very nearby!

I ran back into my room, threw on some craftsman's apparel that I had prepared just in case, tugged my hair under my cap, and put on those pair of spectacles that I had not worn since I got kidnapped by Helmut. These were glasses that I bought on purpose to hide my face which looked exactly similar to Glinda.

It was no simple feat to enter the castle, with its thick high walls, water-filled moat and guards.

But it was a simple thing to leave it.

I pretended to be a lowly craftsman's apprentice, leaving the castle to buy some stuff for my master.

"Thank you for the hard work. It must had been tough at work with Lana's Day just around the corner, huh?"

The guards chatted with me as they let me passed outside.

Once out of the palace, I picked up my legs and began to run.

Where to look for Glinda?

Let's just begin at where the crowd would be. Glinda was so glaringly outstanding that even mere passers-by would be deeply impressed by her appearance.

I made my way from my memories of the marathon race, and immediately found a large crowd forming a ring around something.

I tiptoed to try peering in from above their heads.

A clown-themed clockwork toy was being displayed in front of a clock-maker shop. The clown with his hair stuffed on his back hammered on his drums while a dove flew out of the drum with every hit.

This was identical to the toy we had in our home back in the Winstoria Empire, which had been crafted by Glinda when she was just 6.

I pushed through the crowd to ask the shop owner.

“Who made this toy?”

The shop keeper excitedly replied.

“Yesterday, a beautiful young lady came over to our shop and crafted this object in a second. She said that there were some materials she needed, and would exchange them with this.”

“Where has she gone to?”

“She asked me the location of the nearest shoemaker, so I directed her to George’s shop nearby.”

“Thank you!”

I ran over to enquire at the shoe shop...

“Hoho, oh yes, she took a few pieces of top quality leather, and gave me many lovely designs of shoes. She asked me for some pen and paper, and just drew the designs on the spot. How terrific!”

After that, I heard that Glinda went to an antique shop.

Clockmaker, shoe shop, antique shop... Just what did Glinda want?

I followed the map that the shoe maker drew for me, rounding a street corner...

“Ah!”

“Wha! Sorry!”

I clashed heads-on with another who was also walking around the corner, and the objects in her hands fell, flying all over the place.

A large amount of paper flew about, and the two of us quickly tried to pick them all up.

“T-that, it’s alright.”

The girl I bumped into shyly said in a small voice.

“No, it’s my fault entirely for bumping into you in a hurry.”

“I am at fault too, for not being careful when rounding the corner. There’s no need to help me pick them all up.”

“How can I just leave like that?”

What were on these papers? They seemed to be filled with words... A document? Or a diary?

I had actually no intention of sneaking a peak into another’s things, but I took a glance by accident, and lost all colour on my face.

<Helmut grabbed King Cecello tightly in a kissing embrace.>

“!”

“I-it’s really alright... I can pick them all up on my own.”

I looked up to check out the other person.

Blushing from head to toe while picking up the pieces was none other than Anneth who had just went home!

That probably meant that, these papers were Anneth’s novel? That ‘thing’ about Helmut being Top and King Cecello being Bottom?

Waaaaaaaah! If they were to be blown away by the wind and seen

by other people, all hell might break loose~~~

I picked up the papers all over at three times, no, five times the speed, while Anneth watched with widened eyes.

“T-that...”

At that moment, a piece of paper was picked up by the wind and flew towards the path of a passing horse-drawn carriage.

“Oh no!”

Anneth let out a cry of dismay.

I kicked against the ground, jumping forward with all my might.

“Ah! Danger!”

I heard Anneth’s screams, grabbed the flying piece of paper, and held the rest of the papers close to my chest before hitting the ground and rolling over a few times.

The horse neighed in surprise, and the huge wheels rolled over the stone pavement just beside me.

“Oh... You, are you alright? Have you gotten hurt?”

Anneth ran over and said in a frantic voice.

“Here.”

I climbed up and passed her the stack of paper with a full-faced smile.

“These things are important, right? Luckily they haven’t gotten squashed by the carriage.”

If someone were to see these by accident, she might be arrested for disrespect of both Eren Kingdom and the Winstoria Empire, and might even cause an international incident.

Anneth said with a blushing face.

“Thank you...”

She looked at me with eyes filled with adoration.

“Huh?”

And then tilted her head.

“Looking more carefully, you looked very similar to someone I know.”

I was so stunned that my heart nearly leapt out of my mouth.

G-glasses?... Oh, luckily they were intact on my face.

“Really alike, no matter how you look at it, there has to be some relationship. Have you just arrived from the Winstoria Empire?”

“Haha, I grew up here in Eren. Ho, I am still in a hurry, please excuse me.”

“Oh!”

Anneth seemed to want to say something more, but I turned and fled immediately.

Uwah! Did I manage to get away? The next time I meet with Anneth I must be careful not to expose myself!

I ran breathlessly to the antique shop.

“That lady? She had been around here until this morning. She said that she wanted to read an ancient tome in this shop, and completed it all within a single night. How terrifying.”

I heard there that Glinda had prescribed a list of herbal medication for the shop owner who suffered from chronic shoulder aches. The shop owner was very satisfied with the results of the medicine after

trying it out, and was thus gratified.

Glinda had been here just until this morning?

After that, I ran to the diner that Jerome said that Glinda had ignored him in, as well as the places in the market where Glinda had bought stuff.

Everyone there remembered Glinda, and I heard that she purchased stuff by wagering with the shop owners with scissors-paper-stone, offering to pay ten times the price for losing but taking the food for free if she won. Naturally, she won them all, and so left with a large pile of food without spending a single cent, going next to the arts museum and the library.

I was getting closer to Glinda!

As the prize in my eyes became closer, my head turned feverish and my chest felt the thumping beats of my heart.

Since I was a child, I had always had to rely on Glinda for every single thing.

Every time when I ran into trouble, I would run crying to Glinda; if there were any joyful or sad happenings, Glinda would be the first one I would report to.

Even though Glinda was so cold, she would always listen to me, giving me support.

In the end, Glinda knew every bit about me, but I knew nothing about Glinda.

Glinda would never tell me anything about what was in her heart.

That's right, even three years ago – when we turned fourteen, it was also the same.

One day nearing Lana's day, Glinda sat and played a gentle tune on

the piano.

“—Could that possibly be Lana’s Day music? Wow! Who are you going to confess to?”

No matter how I asked and cajoled, Glinda would not reveal who that lovely music was dedicated to, nor would she tell me where she would gift this song to anybody.

It was the same this time.

<I am not Glinda Dolye any more from today onwards.>

She just disappeared after leaving these words.

How could she just do that! This is preposterous! I must definitely scold her bitterly!

I continued to run while panting profusely.

No matter how fiercely I was to scold her, Glinda would simply carelessly reply “I was just going for a trip, what’s the big deal.”

Then, I would just dump all my frustrations and bitterness I suffered from all this time on her.

Just like before...

Ohhh! I would finally meet with Glinda again! Everything would be restored!

It was just noon when I departed from the castle, but the sky had somehow turned bright red now without my realising it.

I chased after the trail of Glinda, arriving at last at the port.

Huh, why did it end at the port...

I looked at the sailboat that was anchored there with disquiet in my heart.

When I asked about Glinda from the labourer there...

“You’re asking about that lady? She had left on the ship bound for Rubinia, saying that she wanted to get to the Gilian Islands.”

I felt darkness falling before my eyes and my entire body went cold.

“How can that be! Glinda!”

It was so close that I thought I could see her! I thought that Glinda came to find me because she was actually worried for me... But in the end she just left without a word!

I shouted towards the sea.

“Glinda! Glinda! Come back!”

“The ship has been gone for over an hour. She won’t be able to hear it.”

The labourer probably thought that I had been ditched by a girl called Glinda, and so said in a consoling voice.

Glinda abandoned me.

My heart was completely empty, but my body somehow felt like it weighed a ton.

By the time I dragged my feet that felt as heavy as lead back to the palace, it was already night-time.

When I was barred by the guards at the entrance to the palace, I just nonchalantly pulled down my cap and took off my spectacles.

The soldiers, upon seeing my long hair on my shoulders, cried in surprise.

“M-Ms Glinda!”

The crossed spears before me immediately parted.

I emptily walked pass them.

That's right, Chief Minister Gaston seemed to be suspecting me of being a spy... If he heard about this again, he might think I was out spying again... Muah, whatever.

Upon returning to my own room, I had no energy left to even change back into female clothes, but just sat cross-legged on the bed and scratched my head violently.

Would I be stuck in this place forever?

I did not wish to cross-dress any longer.

I did not want to act as Glinda's replacement any more.

That's because after all my efforts of waiting for her to come back, she just abandoned me.

Since Glinda came to Eren, she must have heard about the news of Ms Glinda in the palace, and definitely realise that that would be me.

But, she never visited me once, but just left behind a big pile of trails, and left Eren. Even if I were to be exposed as fake in Eren and got sent to prison for being an imposter, she would probably not have bothered either.

Something hot began to rise in my throat, and I had a splitting headache.

I don't care about Glinda any more! I want nothing more to do with Glinda for the rest of my life!

At that moment, there was a knock on the door.

“... It's me. May I come in?”

A flat monotonous voice came in, was it Princess Seira?

I got down from the bed and went to open the door to see those

emotionless clear eyes observing me.

What did she come here for?

Princess Seira beheld my craftsman's getup and hair in disarray, but displayed no clue of surprise and just coldly asked.

“... Where did you go to today?”

Had she already known about me leaving the palace?

That un-childlike cool expression reminded me of Glinda, causing temper to rise in me.

“Are you here to check if I have escaped? What business is it of yours wherever I go?”

I was stirred by my own words, and my emotions became more unstable.

Glinda was also like that.

Apparently knowing every single thing about me, but letting me know nothing about herself.

“... it is my business, because I have yet to hear your answer.”

This tone that felt as if questioning the results of an experiment, along with the disrespectful use of a simple ‘You’, drove heat to the very roots of my ears.

Ever since this princess had discovered that I was not Glinda, she no longer called me ‘Teacher’, but simply addressed me as ‘You’, as if calling something useless.

I became so angry that I could no longer breathe.

This girl was just like Glinda!

“The answer is <Nothing>! You have never wanted anything! To

<People like you>, there is no need for anything! You guys have everything, but just wanted to abandon it all and be all alone! You are like that! So is Ophelit!”

So was Glinda!

What these people dreamed off, saw, was the <End of the World> where nothing else lived except themselves!

“Go ahead and expose me as an imposter! After all I am sick and tired of cross-dressing already!”

I shouted in anger, and completely lost control. Princess Seira slightly widened her large amethyst eyes and looked at me defencelessly.

“....”

I turned and shut the door, threw the pillow atop the bed, kicked away my shoes, upper coat and pants. Then I took out the dress, corset and pantyhose and threw them onto the bed.

“I’ve had enough! Booohooo! I’ve really had enough!”

Wearing just a pair of shorts, I cried non-stop.

When I finally realised the severity of the situation, it was already deep in the night.

After shouting loudly to the maids that “I am not eating!”, I had fallen asleep atop of the embroidered western gown.

Now, I sat cross-legged on the bed with both hands holding on my head.

“Uwwaaaaaaaaah! What have I said! She is only a child of 9!”

Being abandoned my Glinda was such a severe blow to me that I had completely forgotten about that fact.

When I thought about how the tiny hand that had covered my lips was so small, so fragile and soft...

“Fool! I am such a fool! The worst kind of knave!”

I could not help but began to knock my own head.

To say such horrible things to a child of such small cheeks and soft hands, I was truly no better than a rat! Rubbish child bully! I should just go disappear into a ditch! Even if Glinda and Princess Seira were alike, they were still different people.

To be glared so fiercely at by a transvestite and then angry scolded, she must be really frightened.

If it was Glinda, she might repay me three times in kind, but Princess Seira was probably more defenceless... it m-might even leave a psychological scar...

When I thought back to my mad shouts earlier, and her fragile, lost eyes, I could almost feel knives slicing in my chest. Waaaah~~~~ I was just bullying children~~~~

As I imagined the scene of Princess Seira hiding into a corner, covering her face with both eyes and crying sadly, I was further filled with a sense of guilt.

“Go- go apologise already!”

Now! Immediately! Not one more second of delay!

I was still overwrought, and never considered whether it might be better to wait until later or tomorrow to apologise, as my mind was filled with the images of Princess Seira weeping alone.

Right, let's go to her room, even if it's just to peek from the door outside.

If Princess Seira had already slept, I would just leave her a

message.

I placed a note saying “Really sorry for yesterday”, and placed it into an envelope, then quickly buttoned up in a lacy female night gown and combed my hair. Just in case I bumped into someone, I could at least say that I lost my way in the dark while sleepwalking.

Alright, preparations complete.

Relying on the candlelight in the halls, I shuffled forward in the corridor.

The castle at night was a little scary, but pangs of guilt overcame fear, so I could not care any more about that.

Ho, this must be Princess Seira’s bedroom.

I gripped the handle and slowly twisted it.

Luckily my current identity was female, or I might even be taken to be a night-crawling lolicon... but wait, Princess Seira knew I was male!

No, I was not here to night-crawl, but to apologise and seek forgiveness. I had absolutely no dishonourable intent towards 9 year old girls.

I profusely explained myself in my heart as I gently opened the door.

In an instant, I was taken breathless.

“!”

In the bedroom with pulled-open curtains, moonlight flooded in from the balcony outside.

The floor that had been furnished with soft carpeting was illuminated like a lake of silver, while the patterns on the glass window cast shadows like a thick forest, glittering all over with tiny

sparkle.

The scene within the room was one that was directly ripped out of the fairy tales.

At the centre of this lonely world laid a pile of white object.

That was Princess Seira.

Her body was wrapped in a blanket, back towards me, motionless.

“Your Highness...”

Even though I called her, she did not reply.

I swallowed and moved into the room.

Something small stuck between my feet and the surface of the ground.

Picking it up, I found that it was a crystal bead. So the sparkling glitter I saw was this? But, why were these beads all over the place? They couldn't have fallen from the ceiling chandelier, right?

I felt increasingly uncomfortable, and so went around to the front to steal a glance at her face, thus discovered that the girl who had been clad completely in white and wrapped in a thin blanket was, in fact, weeping in silence.

Her sad eyes were downcast, lips tightened, and tears as round as the crystal beads on the floor were rolling down her cheek.

This doll-like appearance was quieter and calmer than the scenes I had imagined, but the impact of it was a hundred times more tragic and lonely.

“S-sorry!”

I fell to the ground and lowered my head in apology.

“Truly, really sorry! Sorry! Sorry! Sorry!”

I apologise continuously.

“As an adult, how could I have said such outrageous things to you! You are not wrong, the fault is with me, all due to my own foolishness! Really, truly sorry!”

Princess Seira continued to cry non-stop.

She pouted, and tears continued to fall from her eyes.

Ohhhh! ... Did this child always hide and cry alone? All this time?

And I had thoughtless hurt her. At this time, I was utterly filled with regret, apologising profusely with “Sorry”, “You can hit me”, “If you would just laugh, I would do anything”, “I would even be your slave”, “Please, I beg of you, stop crying”.

But no matter what I said, the princess did not react.

Like her heart had been snatched away, tears just ran liberally from her eyes.

Perhaps after hearing my words, Princess Seira’s spirit had flown off to another world, and I was only left with an empty shell... When I considered this, my heart shattered.

What must I do?

I had no idea that I had caused such deep wounds in her.

As I felt shocked, the blanket wrapped about her body slipped and fell to the ground.

Princess Seira remained motionless, and as I helped to pick up her blanket, I suddenly noticed an open book at her side.

A thick, large book written in ancient language.

That was the book which Princess Seira often carried around close to her chest.

The page which the book had opened to had not only words, but illustrations as well. It was the picture of the back of a sage playing a flute in a black cape blown by the wind... This was apparently a replication of the artists' impression of Ophelit as represented in excavations of the ancient ruins.

But the thing that drew my attention was not the legendary genius, but the small blurry picture of the back of a young girl standing besides Ophelit...

The little girl stretched out her right hand towards the black figure, as if to grasp the black cape Ophelit was wearing...

Oh, I see now.

So that was it.

Many things clicked in my brain, and my heart was pierced with a tight pain... I could not help but hugged Princess Seria tightly.

That icy slim body did not struggle.

How powerless, how lonely, were you as you pined for the fulfilment of this dream.

I used the gentlest and kindest voice I could muster and told her.

“I know the <thing you desire>.”

Goddess of Love Lana’s Day.

In the afternoon of Lana’s Day.

The Queen Mother received many gifts and smiled joyfully.

The twin princesses presented her with a rose-shaped coral ring, Prince Ryuujу gave her a thimble of emerald; but the thing that

surprised everyone was that even Prince Shin gave her a brooch made of clay with a piece of amber in its centre. Its shape is that of a Margaret, and its edges had been painted white. Previously I had noticed Prince Shin silently crafting it during the lessons, so this was actually the present he had in mind for Her Majesty.

“Ara, is this hand-made by Shin? It’s great! So cute! Thank you so much!”

The Queen put on the brooch on the spot, hugged Prince Shin and rubbed Her cheeks against his, causing His Highness to blush happily.

Naturally, His Majesty King Cecello had gifted the person He loved the most with jewellery, as evidenced by the silver necklace with a gemstone as blue as His Majesty’s eyes which had been sparkling around Her Majesty’s slim neck since this morning.

Every present had been a pleasant laughter-inducing surprise to Her Majesty, but the one that absolutely touched the Queen today had to be Princess Seira’s gift to Her.

That afternoon, before the gathered and sitting King Cecello, Her Majesty and all the other princes and princesses, Princess Seira dedicated her violin performance to the Queen.

It was a personal composition of Princess Seira herself which was totally unlike her usual sad and lonely note, but one that was teeming with gladness and warmth.

Before the performance began, I had informed the Queen and all present.

“In the Winstoria Empire, people compose and dedicate songs to their beloved, so today, Her Highness Princess Seira would also like to perform a song that she had composed herself to her most beloved Queen Mother.”

Her Majesty’s eyes widened greatly as She heard those words.

Princess Seira seemed somewhat nervous as she held her violin and bow, glancing uneasily at me.

Her expression only relaxed a little when I smiled and lifted the tambourine in my hand to show her, but then it tightened again as she began the performance.

As soothing and pleasing as always, but much, much warmer – such notes poured forth.

The Queen had a shocked expression on Her face, and became moved almost to tears as She listened spellbound to the sweet melody.

I was also completely affected by Princess Seira's awesome composition, shaking my tambourine in concerto with the violin music.

The one who suggested for Princess Seira to compose music for the Queen as Lana's Day present was naturally I.

-- I know the <thing you desire>.

When I spoke these words that night, the Princess Seira in my chest reacted for the first time.

Like a bullied little girl, she said softly in a lost and insecure little voice.

“... I do not ... have anything I desire, because... I have everything... So... I can only abandon... everything... go look for the <End of the World> alone... That's my wish... So your answer's correct...”

The knife that wounded Princess Seira so deeply also pierced my own heart. Those words that I had used on her had been really too much, and I wanted now to beat myself into a bloody pulp.

“No, I answered wrong.”

I said in a completely decisive voice.

The thing that Princess Seira desired, was not to become Ophelit.

Why did Princess Seira only have interest in <Glinda>?

Why did she look at me so intently?

Why did she keep holding onto Ophelit's book, and read it in front of me?

When I fell into her bathtub, she had lightly tugged on my hand...

-- Isn't Teacher... here to see me?

Why did she look so hopefully at me then?

Princess Seira was still hoping right now.

Hoping and waiting for the unmatched genius Glinda Dolye.

"I had been completely wrong about you. You must have been really frightened, really lonely, right?"

Because she had been gifted extraordinary intelligence, she was far beyond common people.

With her all-comprehending powers of perception, she could see through the cold calculating side to His Majesty who so loved His children. When she saw those things that a 9 year old child should never be allowed to see, just how horrified and lonely would she had felt.

If I was just like my Father the King... When she considered such things, fear must had frozen her all over.

Princess Seira had loved the legends and heroes in them, because she could see that those characters were out of the ordinary just like she was.

"Your wish was for someone who can hold the hand that you reached out with. Someone who can understand your loneliness,

someone like yourself... a <soulmate>... you have been waiting for someone like that.”

I released my hands and looked at her eyes.

Princess Seira continued to weep as she watched me with a fragile expression.

I wrapped my hands around her tiny hands and slowly closed around them.

“I will be your companion.”

I said with a fervour that was as warm as the insides of my throat.

Princess Seira gave a little jump.

“I am no genius, neither can I <see the right way> of everything, but I will be your companion no matter what time it is! I will listen to whatever you want to say! Help you whenever you need someone! So, just say whatever you wish to say, do anything that you want to do!”

The tiny fingers felt a little more forceful as they held onto my fingers.

The face covered in tears looked up, and Princess Seira asked timidly.

“... anything that I want to do?”

“That’s right, anything that you want to do.”

“... There’s no such thing.”

“The crystals on the floor, are those for Lana’s Day present?”

Princess Seira’s face which had been downcast all this while looked up at me in surprise, and then immediately lowered again.



“... E-every year... Everyone would... give presents to Queen Mother... But... I am different... So, no need...”

Her voice went dead half-way into the sentence, drowned out by sobs.

I visualised Princess Seira weeping as she broke apart the jewellery prepared for her Queen Mother, and was tremendously hurt myself inside.

“Sorry, it is all because my words had hurt you. Can it be repaired just in time for Lana’s Day?”

“... No, Lord Father, Elder Brother, Sarasa and Orie... and even Shin... would be giving presents to Queen Mother... So I don’t have to...”

Even though I apologised with all my might, Princess Seira continued to shake her head in grief.

It was obvious how lonely and anguished Princess Seira had felt all along.

Sigh, then what should I do?

I wrecked my brains and tried my hardest to figure out a way.

What must I do to lead this childish little Princess back from the darkness of her gift? What could I do to restore her confidence?

Maybe if I praised her in the things she was the best in...

Got it!

“Then, just give the Queen the thing that only you can give. In my country, the thing we give to our most beloved is not precious stones, but music. Aren’t you the best at playing the violin? Why not just compose a song for Her Majesty, and play it for Her?”

Princess Seira was dumbfounded when she heard that.

“I would also help. How about it?”

I asked again before she shakily nodded.

Then, the two of us composed the music until day break. Even though that was what I said, in actual fact, all I did was offer my comments after listening to Princess Seira’s hums.

After which, Her Highness began to diligently rehearse the composed song.

Princess Seira halted a few times during the practices and lowered her head in hesitation, so I decided to participate in the performance as well and told her, “Let me support you with my tambourine.”

The result was this sunny-warm music played by Princess Seira for her Queen Mother now.

I stood behind her, shaking my tambourine at her beats.

It would be alright, I’m here, your companion is here.

So, you can just do all that you need to do to convey your love to your most beloved.

My last-minute emergency practice paid-off, as the rings of my tambourine harmoniously fell in line with the dancing notes of Princess Seira’s melody.

Prince Ryuuju, the twin princesses and even Prince Shin listened in delightful rapture.

Princess Suzuna who lied on her Queen Mother’s chest opened her eyes and laughed cheerfully as if to make joyful music into the mix.

King Cecello had his arm around the shoulders of Her Majesty, and watched us with an extremely gentle expression.

The Queen’s eyes shimmered with teary light like the children, and then bloomed into a blushing smile.

See, Princess Seira's intention had been clearly conveyed.

<I love Queen Mother very much.>

Such a pure, vital and joyful thing.

I suddenly realised as I shook the tambourine, the music of which Her Majesty had said only children could bring out completely.

Glinda and Princess Seira might both be geniuses, but they were not completely beyond human comprehension.

Throughout my seventeen years of living together with Glinda, I had in fact come to learn of many things.

When she was feeling down, she would pick on some mundane stuff around the house, such as peeling the tough fibre off long beans or dismantling a knot in a chain.

She would never look at me fully in the eye if she was feeling really hurt.

When she was happy, her nose would quiver ever so slightly.

Even if Glinda was an extremely intelligent, highly unpredictable, completely mysterious person and a troublesome elder sister, I could still figure many things about her.

Joyful melody filled the atmosphere with warmth, lifting up smiles on the faces of everyone. Even Princess Suzuna wiggled in happiness.

As the performance came to a close, King Cecello helped take the baby princess from the arms of Her Majesty.

The Queen ran towards Princess Seira and hugged her tightly.

"Thank you, Seira, this is such a beautiful gift. It is a really happy day today!"

She said in a teary voice.

Princess Seira seemed highly flustered, and tugged on Her Majesty's clothes in a flush.

"T-Thank you for making such delicious breakfast for us every morning... I... I love Queen Mother very much."

Her shaky and unsteady words somehow touched me greatly.

"I love Seira very much too."

Princess Seira's lips gradually bloomed into a glowing smile.

"Oh! We love Queen Mother very much too!"

"Yes! Love Mother the most!"

Princesses Sarasa and Orie, embraced Her Majesty with Princess Sarasa; Prince Shin seemed to be expressing his love for his Mother by silently tugging at Her skirt.

"Your Highness Prince Ryuuju, won't you go as well?"

"...Humph. I'm already an adult. So that won't be important, Glinda... Besides, I-I have something I'd like to give..."

"Oh c'mon, what is Your Highness talking about? You're still a child too. So don't be shy, just go."

I gave Prince Ryuuju a little shove with both hands from behind.

"Wha!"

Prince Ryuuju gave a little surprised shout and got pushed running towards the huddled group, knocking into the twin princesses.

"Ara! Big Bro Ryuuju is always so frenzied!"

"That's right! Just like a little kid!"

"What! It is not I who..."

Her Majesty the Queen watched over the children, and said happily.

“Ryuuju, Seira, Sarasa and Orie, Shin and Suzuna, I love each and every one of you.”

His Majesty who was carrying Princess Suzuna somehow appeared at my side without my notice.

“Previously, I tend to hold off giving my Lana’s Day present until at night, but today I had a premonition and decided to give it immediately in the morning. Looks like that has been a good call. After Seira’s gift, there’s no way for my gift to appear any comparable.”

King Cecello seemed to whisper conspiratorially to me in a low voice.

“Ms Glinda, you are the only one with the capability of helping Seira compose a music of this form, and perform it with this calibre.”

“It’s just a coincidence.”

“Even if that’s the case, I must still thank you as a father. Ms Glinda, I invited you here specifically for the sake of Seira, because that child has scarcely anyone who can understand her, or communicate with her as an equal. Ms Glinda Dolye has been invited to be the private tutor of Eldest Princess Seira.”

Princess Seira’s private tutor...

It was such an incomparably honoured praise in my ears.

His Majesty continued in a friendly and warm voice.

“Lady Glinda does not require the use of Ophelit’s all-conquering silver flute, but relied on the tambourine usable even by small children to open the locked heart of Seira. From this day forth, please continue to assist that child with the help of the tambourine.”

“Certainly.”

I said with bravado.

But I also wondered how things could have turned out if the one who came to Eren Kingdom was the real Glinda.

Perhaps both she and Princess Seira could establish a certain level of understanding with each other.

Since, in hindsight, I realised that back then Glinda could had just been sulking when she said “They are all different from me” as she read her tales of heroes and legends alone.

A feeling of longing continued to linger in my chest...

His Majesty then put on a somewhat funny disappointed face, saying.

“Also please advise Seira, so that she would no longer be afraid of me.”

“I believe Her Highness Princess Seira loved Your Majesty very much as well.”

That’s right, for I was in a similar situation. Even though Glinda vanished all on her own and left me with a heap of problems, I still loved this member of my family deeply from within.

King Cecello smiled lightly, and replied.

“I know.”

Then, he laid gentle eyes on the Queen being hugged tightly by her children, as well as the children who surrounded their beloved Mother.

“Isn’t my family great?”

The severe cold blue eyes of a leader seemed to have melted away

that instant.

-- Seira is very similar to me.

This was the hint given me by King Cecello.

The lonely King Cecello who played his violin in solitude in an ancient castle was changed by his encounter with a foreign young lady, as the two grew to understand each other.

Therefore, change would gradually come too, for Princess Seira as well as the world around her.

For, just the King Cecello who changed the entire kingdom for the sake of his beloved, Princess Seira too, would one day encounter someone special to her that she valued above all others.

I pray too, that Glinda would remember me in the moments when she felt lonely, and then come back as though nothing had happened.

Then, I would first unleash my fury on her, before hugging her tightly, saying "Welcome home."

Princess Seira who was quivering in embarrassment in the bosom of Her Majesty turned to look at me, her face completely red, but shone me a shy smile.

It was a child-like smile as simple as wild flowers blooming in the fields, but seeing that smile, I could almost feel as if Glinda was smiling at me, and so returned a smile of my own.

That night, while alone in my own room, I heard people knocking at my door.

"It's me, may I enter?"

"Princess Seira? Hmm, sure, please enter."

The door lightly opened, and the princess worriedly peeked in. Her expression had become far richer like a normal child's.

When the two of us were alone together, she would often display such somewhat embarrassed expressions, maybe because she had no idea what to say or how to behave before me.

Princess Seira looked down on the floor and swayed side to side for a while, before putting forth both her hands to the front and bowing towards me with a blushing face.

“Thanks so much for all the help you gave me. I have never played together with my brothers and sisters before, so I am really glad; I being able to give a gift that made Queen Mother so happy, i-it’s also because of you... Truly, thank you very much.”

“All I did was to provide a little assistance. Right, I too have a gift for you.”

“?”

I opened a small box I had delivered from the craftsmen, and a silver bracelet of crystal beads had been laden within. An amethyst in the designs of a flower had also been crafted according to my request and attached on it.

I gently lifted Princess Seira’s right hand and wound the bracelet around her hand twice, making her eyes grow wide.

“This is...”

“This is my Lana’s Day present to you.”

“Eee...”

“Even though I say that, actually the crystal beads have been collected from your own room, and amethyst is not really something expensive... But, this is the evidence that I am your companion.”

The stunned Princess Seira who had been looking at the bracelet looked up in shock when she heard those words.

I looked at her with a gentle gaze, feeling that this was probably the sacred emotions felt by the knights swearing loyalty to their princesses in the legends.

-- Private tutor of Eldest Princess Seira.

That title ordained by His Majesty, sparkled like gold in my heart.

Princess Seira placed her hand which was wearing the bracelet on her chest and said "Teacher."

A smile floated onto her cherry coloured lips.

"Would you please call me just <Seira> from today?"

"Huh?"

"It should be alright when there is just the two of us."

"Emm. Alright."

She just called me <Teacher>! Ever since she had discovered that I was an imposter, she had been just using <You> to address me, but now, she was calling me <Teacher>!

Princess Seira's mood rose as she looked happily at me whose heartbeat began to speed up.

"I still have much to learn from Teacher, so please teach me as you wish from now on as well."

"Mmm, I too have much to learn from you as well, Seira."

"T-That... Also..."

Princess Seira became more fidgety.

She shyly looked down at her two feet, then looked up at me, and abashedly asked.

“First, could I ask... What is the name of Teacher?”

“My name?”

“... Is it not alright?”

She asked worriedly.

“No. Then I would just tell you alone, please don’t tell anyone else though.”

I had no idea it could be so bashful to tell someone else my own name.

“My name is Sherlock Dolye, everyone just call me <Sher -chan>.”

Seira seemed as if she had obtained something of immeasurable worth, focusing all her attention on my name.

“This... is the secret between me and Teacher.”

“Mmm.”

I nodded as her face turned red again.

“T-then, I would be taking my leave.”

Princess Seira turned and left in a hurry.

Maybe realising the immaturity in that action, she calmly turned and said at the doorway.

“Goodbye.”

Bowing low...

“Teacher... Sherlock.”

She shyly gave me a little smile, and closed the door lightly with her little hand.

For a long while after, my heart hammered non-stop.

Princess Seira recognized me as <Teacher>! Not <Teacher Glinda>, but <Teacher Sherlock>! I was so delighted that I could fly into the sky!

For this little girl so much alike to Glinda, how would she turn out?

I wish I could do something for Seira that I did not manage to do for Glinda.

Right, I still had to prepare for tomorrow morning's class.

Even though there would be no way for me to actually teach Seira about the books she could read, I could at least teach her some customs and culture of the Winstoria Empire, and about how commoners lived there.

Such things would also be useful to know for the heir-to-the-throne Prince Ryuuju.

Let's use the twin princesses' favourite topics as a lead-in to it then.

Extra-curriculum activities should also be interesting, and I should pay more attention to Prince Shin too.

I was completely energized, and so began to organize the desk-full of study material.

“Huh?”

I discovered a piece of paper stuck between the drawers of the desk.

When did this fall out? Maybe it was when I was setting some test papers.

Picking it up, I became so shocked that I could not hold the paper steadily.

“!”

Ba-thump, Ba-thump, my heart would not stop hammering.

In a very familiar handwriting was just a single line of words.

“I don’t have athletes’ foot, nor am I little red beans, they are lemons.”

Glinda!

My temperature rose and my brain went feverish.

Glinda had been in this room? When was that? Definitely before she boarded that boat for Rubinia, so this piece of paper had been here for a few days already. Wah! Why hadn't I noticed it earlier!

That Glinda. If you were going to leave a note, why didn't you just come and talk with me directly? As expected, I still could not understand Glinda's thought process.

While I continued to be flustered by the discovery, another knock sounded at the door.

Who could that be? And why at this time!

“Coming.”

I roughly pulled open the door, and found His Highness Prince Ryuujу frowning, lips tightened and standing at the door with an unpleasant-looking face.

Why was the prince here? Was there something I could do for him? I was worrying when Prince Ryuujuu's face turned as red as a tomato.

He took out a small box tied by a ribbon.

Huh? Was that a Lana's Day gift?

I had heard from Anneth that it was common to give gifts as thanks to females that had taken care of you, but taking one look at this box wrapped with ribbon along with the blushing red expression of Prince Ryuuj, you would know it was a love-confession no matter how you looked at it...

Huh? What? You're kidding, right? Could... could he have fallen for me?

I was struck by lightning.

Could this be his first love?

Ahhhhh! But His Highness looked so serious, just like back when I was first in love... Uwwwwwaaaaahhh! If I were to discover that the target of my first love was a man, there's no way I could take it! If things were to be exposed, emotional scars would be left on his heart! Too cruel!

I was still shocked and worried by the severity of the situation, when another voice came.

“Hey! Glinda!”

Sir Jerome from the knights company walked over with a grim face.

I'm busy right now!

My heart screamed at him, but of course he could not have heard it.

Jerome acted as if he had not seen the prince, and just kept glaring at me as he approached slowly.

Was he still angry about Glinda giving him the snub that day? Or was he going to challenge me now to some other weird competition? But I was busy right now wrecking my brain over my student's first love affairs!

At this moment, Jerome grabbed my wrist.

Click.

My right wrist was wrapped in a golden bracelet decorated with a red ruby.

What was that?

"This is my heart! You should understand what day it is today, right!"

"Huuuuuuuuuuuh?"

This guy as well?

"Impudence! The one who should be giving Glinda her gift first should be a prince like me!"

His Highness jumped in anger below Jerome and shouted.

"Love is beyond royalty."

"Wha....What love!"

Didn't he hate my guts? How did this suddenly turn into a love discussion? Because Glinda had been cold towards him? Was he some masochist? Even if this was the case, there's no way I could be happy to be confessed to by some man!

The prince trembled in anger.

Jerome stared straight at me with burning hot passion.

It was the most popular day of my entire life, but I was just

drowning in cold sweat and confusion.



番外編

お城は今日も、夢見がち

Afterword

Hi, everyone, I am Mizuki Nomora.

Thank you for purchasing “Dress na Boku Ga Yangotonaki Katagata no Katei Kyoushi-sama na Kudan”.

This book includes the newest stories uploaded on Fami’s library of web-published novels. In fact, I have long completed this book since summer, so I had felt especially reminiscent of the time when I first put this book into my corner. Occasionally, I would still pull this book from my shelves to browse, wondering how I actually felt when I first began writing, and remembering about the things happening at that moment – feeling both warm and emotional as I reminiscent.

The original version of “Dress Boku” was a short story I wrote in my notes during my college days, so it struck a rather deep chord within me. Back then, my rules for myself were to write at least 6 pages per day, so from after classes till the closing time for the school library I would be writing non-stop with my mechanical pencil. I would even write on the front row of the lecture room during classes, and had no memories of my classmates coming to ask me to borrow notes just before the exams; when I failed my exams, the teacher would even give me sympathy marks, saying “Even though I’ve seen you taking notes so diligently at the front row during class...”

My closet has become filled with these bite-sized stories from my notes, and even now when I review them, I’d just cringe from embarrassment. Really want to dictate them all to be burnt after I’m gone so that no one would be able to see them ever, but at the same time I missed those times very much.

Back then, I just wrote about anything that I liked, excitedly jumping to another topic after completing one, then spending some time to consider the topic before writing... happy times.

This story came from that era, but the main character of that story was a simple “Lady tutor”, and the entire tale was described in the letters she wrote to her elder twin sister. The main character this time is a boy, and the story is now being told in the 1st person perspective, so naturally the style has become different.

Illustrations had been done by Karory-sensei, who created the ultra-adorable Sher-chan as the cover.

Just a couple of days before “Dress Boku” was published, Eucalyptus-sensei also drew many pictures of the fragile and cute Sher-chan. This is another artist that I highly recommend everyone to support.

“Dress Boku Vol. 2” has been planned till after “Hikaru”, with plans for Vol. 3 to be decided after sales. Prior to the grand finale, I truly hope the stories can be extended, so if everyone would continue to support the second volume, I’d be so grateful.

So I would end my note here, so everyone, see you in April’s publication of “Hikaru”!

15th January 2012

NOMURA Mizuki

“Hilresな僕がやんごとなき日々の家庭教師様な件”

飛利
あめごとく

ごと
いま

じ
ゆ

挿絵を担当
させていただきました！

今後とも
よろしくおねがい
します。

Kamey
2012.2

Credits

Translation by [GirlyBoysAlliance](#).

eBook by [Olivki](#).